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CUMMING

THE COMFORTER;

OR,

THOUGHTS ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

BY

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The Comforter.

I.

The Ministration of the Spirit.

A FAVOURITE and instructive line of teaching in the New Testament Scriptures is that of allusive contrast. The New Testament economy shows us the lustre of the Old, and the Old finds its complement in the clear and beautiful expositions of the New.

It is in this strain that St. Paul refers, in the following words, to the old dispensation:—"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made

glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."—2 Cor. iii. 7-10.

The Apostle argues that the Levitical dispensation was "glorious." It was so: it was given on Sinai, amid great pomp and unearthly splendor. On the mount the very face of Moses shone with glory, from its contact with the presence of Deity. The ministration of the Spirit, that is, the evangelical economy, is yet more so. The first was the ministration of death—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" the second is the communication of life. The one presented a rigid and inflexible law—the other imparts a plastic and transforming principle; the first was engraven on stone—the last on the living tablets of the heart. The ministration of the law was essentially transitory; its lightnings are now laid, its thunders lulled, its tables broken, and its whole structure and economy dissolved: but the ministration of the Spirit is to stretch into everlasting ages, to add to the brightness of heaven, and to give tone and colouring to the thoughts and praises of the redeemed throughout eternity.

But the ministration of the Spirit is not placed in antagonism to the ministration of the law, as if the one were contrary to the other. They are not so. On the contrary, the one is the complement of the other: the first is the bud, and the last is the full blossom; the one is a series of types—the other, of truths; the one presents us with the patriarch at his altar, the Jew in his temple, and the priest in his holy place—the other gives us the preacher in his pulpit, the hearer in his pew, and the great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens. External rites have passed away, like clouds from the sky, but eternal truths, struck into the

heart, remain, like the stars, for ever. The altars of Judaism have been abandoned, its victims have ceased to bleed, and instead the Holy Spirit now preaches and points to the great oblation made once for all for the sins of mankind. Moses is no longer read in the synagogue, but Christ is preached in the church; the priest no longer burns incense within the veil, but the Redeemer intercedes in heaven; Sinai emits no more thunders, but the "still small voice" is yet audible to the people of God; the lightnings that flash despair are no more seen, but "the light of God's countenance" is still "lifted up" upon his saints. In short, there has been progress in God's revelation of his will—that progress which is visible in creation. Is not the earth a vast laboratory? are not islands emerging from the deep? are not new shapes and forms of crystallization taking place? do not all things work upward towards perfection? So Revelation has been progressive from its dawn to its nearing noon.

It is not, however, meant to be alleged, that the Holy Spirit was not in the former dispensation. It was true in the days of Abraham, just as it is true now—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There was never but one church, and there never was but one way of turning sinners into saints; there never was but one spring of life, one element of victory, one source of sanctification — the Holy Spirit of God. ✓

Wherein, it may be asked, then, was the difference? We answer, it was in degree, not in kind. There is "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn;" the spring leaps from the hill-side, and swells into the river, that bears on its bosom the navy of the empire,

and the treasures of the earth. And these are but the just illustrations of the progress of the kingdom of Christ, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Moses, from Moses to Paul, and from Paul to Luther. The one dispensation was the grub in its chrysalis state — the other the beautiful butterfly, unfurling its wings, and sailing in the air, a thing of life. We have far greater light, more glorious privileges, more inspiring hopes; the glory of the dispensation of the Spirit is as much superior to that of the dispensation of the law, as is the glory of that city that hath no need of the sun nor of the moon, to that of the earthly Canaan; and if there be no nobler nor more illustrious specimens of Christianity now than of old, it is our sin and our shame, and nothing else.

The superiority of our dispensation to the previous one will be seen in such points of view as the following. We have, in the Gospel dispensation, views of God far more beautiful, consolatory, and clear. In the dispensation of the law the Father was clouded with the awful drapery of the Judge; his very presence shook the earth, and made even Moses tremble; the flaming sword of the cherubim needed to be passed under, before the hungry could eat of the tree of life. But in the evangelical dispensation "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses"—and "the Spirit of adoption," which we receive, helps us to see, and to say—"Abba, Father." It is written upon its very lintels and doorposts, as its great central truth—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

If we look to the worship of the old dispensation, as contrasted with that of the new, we shall see the superior glory of the latter. The one had a heavy and costly ceremonial, fitted to awe and dazzle men's senses—the latter has a simple and sublime service, calculated to reach and captivate men's hearts; the one possessed an outward Leviticus, with rigid rubrics—the other is characterised by an inward and spiritual worship. The Jewish church was “all glorious without”—the Christian church is “all glorious within.” All that the former had materially, the latter has morally. Truth, the lamp of the holy place—life, the rubric—love, the ritual—all hours canonical, and all places holy—every day an anniversary, and every spot a shrine. The one, in short, was the letter—the other is, in one word, the life.

If we look at the place of worship, we shall see also another evidence of the superior glory of our dispensation. The temple was the central object of the former, with its mercy-seat, and its shechinah, and its overshadowing cherubim, and its other impressive furniture. Have we anything to correspond to this? We have that which infinitely eclipses it. I do not quote those vast and truly magnificent structures, our cathedrals, where the very stones of the earth seem to have had life, and to have shot up into foliage and blossom; but we have what Christ himself pronounced to be the true temple—his own holy and perfect humanity; and wheresoever, in the poorest cellar, or in gorgeous hall, or in royal palace, or in rags, in ermine, in lawn, or in purple, we find a true Christian, we find a true temple, beside which cathedrals, shrines, and synagogues, the temple of Solomon, with all its glory, and the temple

of Herod, with all its augmented magnificence, become dim and pale—for that true Christian is “the temple of the Holy Ghost.”

The Jew had also his high priest, a divine and august institution; but we have a far more glorious Priest. The Jewish high priest offered first for his own sins, then for the sins of the people, and eventually died; but we have a High Priest who has “passed into the heavens,” and liveth for ever, “holy, harmless, and undefiled,” arrayed in the imperishable robes of our humanity—our names upon his heart, and our souls in his hand. The shadow, in short, is absorbed in the eternal substance; the star that was beautiful, but dim and distant, and without any mellowing power, is lost in the full-orbed splendor of the unsetting sun; the rite has perished, but the religion remains; the ceremony has “waxed old as doth a garment, and as a vesture it is folded up,” but the Son of God is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” If, then, the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.”

The former dispensation had its sacrifices, but this was their imperfection, that the same sacrifice was oft-times offered, and could not take away sin. They had the morning and the evening lamb, the lamb of Levi—

we have “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;” the Jew had his paschal lamb, that was offered once a year—we have “Christ our passover, sacrificed for us.” Our sacrifice needs no repetition, and is capable of no increase. Its retrospective efficacy reached Adam, amid the *debris* of Paradise—its present efficacy comprehends the round globe, as with a glorious zone, and its prospective blessings are inexpressible now, as they will be unexhausted throughout eternity.

But who is the Spirit, whose ministration we have been considering?

First, we allege, he is a Person; and secondly, that Person is God. The following passages are evidences that he is a Person, and not (as the Socinian alleges) an influence, a metaphor, or a figure of speech. Isaiah xlvi. 16—“Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.” Acts viii. 29—“Then the Spirit *said* unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” Acts xvi. 16—“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden* of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.” 1 Cor. ii. 10—“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit *searcheth* all things, yea, the deep things of God.” These, surely, are not the effects of a metaphor; surely it would be doing violence, alike to the writers and to the language they employ, to suppose that any other than a Person is alluded to. The Spirit is represented as *speaking* in the prophets and the apostles. Mark xiii. 11—“But when they shall lead you, and deliver

you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Luke i. 67—
 "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied." 1 Pet. i. 10, 11—"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 2 Pet. i. 21—"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Spirit is represented as *striving*. Gen. vi. 3—"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh." *Reproving*. John xvi. 8—"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." *Helping*. Rom. viii. 26—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." *Guiding*. John xvi. 13—"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." *Bearing witness*. 1 John v. 6—"It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth." *Testifying*. John xv. 26—"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He

shall testify of Me.” *Working.* 1 Cor. xii. 11—“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” He is *grieved*. Eph. iv. 30—“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” He is *resisted*. Acts vii. 51—“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” He is *tempted*. Acts v. 9—“Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?” We are baptized in his name, and blessed in his name. All these and other acts, attributed to the Spirit of God, constitute irrefragable proof that He is a Person.

In the next place, he is God. Compare Exod. xvii. 7—“And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?”—with Heb. iii. 7-9—“Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.” Thus the Holy Ghost was tempted in the wilderness. He is therefore Jehovah. Compare also Isaiah vi. 5-9—“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips;

and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not:"—with Acts xxviii. 25, 26 —"And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive." Simeon's song is addressed to the Holy Spirit. It was revealed to him by the Spirit that he should not depart, till he had seen the Lord's Christ; and in his song he addresses the Divine Person that made this promise to him, (that is, the Holy Spirit,) and acknowledges that the promise was fulfilled. If we compare the third and fourth verses of the fifth chapter of the Acts, we shall see that to lie to God and to lie to the Holy Ghost are convertible and equivalent expressions: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." In Ezekiel the Spirit gives life to the dry bones; in Rom. viii. 11, we read—"The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies."

John iii. 6—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"¹

1 John v. 4—"Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." Here we see that to be born of the Spirit, and to be born of God, is the same thing.

Acts xiii. 2—"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Heb. v. 4—"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Here we see the Spirit doing what is declared to be the exclusive prerogative of God.

Matt. ix. 38—"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Acts xiii. 4—"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." This is evidence not only of an attribute of God being declared to be an attribute of the Holy Spirit, but also of worship being paid to Him.

John xiv. 17—"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." 1 Cor. xiv. 25—"And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." These two passages show that the Spirit of truth and the indwelling God are one and the same Being.

2 Tim. iii. 16—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 1 Pet. i. 12—"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have

preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Thus inspiration, the prerogative of God, is declared to be the prerogative of the Holy Ghost.

John vi. 45 — "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God." 1 Cor. ii. 13 — "Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." John xiv. 26 — "But the Comforter," which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Thus the prophecy that Christians "shall be taught of God," is fulfilled in the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

Acts v. 3 — "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" Acts v. 4 — "Whiles it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Thus the perfect identity of God and the Holy Ghost is affirmed.

1 Cor. ii. 11 — "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 14 — "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." These two texts show that the things of God, and the things of the Spirit of God, are the things of one Person.

Deut. vi. 16 — "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah." Acts v. 9 —

“Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?” Thus to tempt the Spirit of God is the same thing as to tempt God.

In Ezekiel xxxvii. 9 — “Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind; prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live”—the Spirit of God is represented as the great quickener of the dead.

In Acts ii. 24—“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death,”—1 Peter iii. 18 — “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,”—Rom. i. 4 — “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,”—the Holy Spirit is set forth as raising Christ from the dead.

In Matt. xii. 28 — “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you,” — Luke xi. 20 — “But if I, with the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you,”—Acts xix. 11—“And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul,” — Rom. xv. 19 — “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God,”—the Spirit is represented as the source of all miraculous power.

In 1 Cor. iii. 17—“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are,”—John xiv. 17 — “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye

know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," — he is represented as dwelling in the people of God.

Now is it possible to conceive, that he who is thus identified with God in every word of truth, in every act of power, is any other than God ? Is it possible to believe, that he who gives life to the dead soul, raises from the tomb the dead body, inspires Scripture, performs miracles, gives ministers to the church, and dwells in all saints, at all times, and in all places of the world, is any other than God ? To change the heart is a more stupendous exercise of power than to create the universe. To mould and shape yielding matter into countless forms of beauty, into suns and stars and minerals and flowers, is beyond all dispute the evidence of the finger of God ; but to allay evil passions, to dethrone corruption from the human heart, to transform by a touch the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and to construct from the ruins of the soul a residence for Deity, is an expression of yet greater power. A saint is a monument of greater might than a fixed star ; a Christian is a more glorious thing than creation itself.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Spirit is represented as having the attribute of eternity, where Christ is said to have "offered himself through the eternal Spirit." We are baptized in his name, we are blessed in his name, we are taught by his wisdom, we are comforted by his consolations. None is able to do all this, save he who is God.

If, then, we revert to the banks of the ancient Jordan, and the baptism of Jesus, or if we refer to our own baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost," or if we look forward to the Apocalyptic description of the sevenfold Spirit, we must conclude that the Holy Spirit is God. God the Father is sovereign love, God the Son is redeeming love, God the Spirit is effective love; "God," the triune Jehovah, "is love." This is the foundation of the Christian faith, the hope of Christian men, and the main element of that superior glory which makes "the ministration of righteousness" exceed in glory "the ministration of condemnation;" "for if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

II.

The Other Comforter.

JESUS just told his disciples that he was about to leave them. This information was to them the severest stroke of all. It all but overwhelmed them. They felt that they were about to lose their greatest friend, their noblest and most unwearied benefactor. In his power they had realized exhaustless resources, and in his presence omnipotent protection, and in his love springs of sympathy and hope and peace. Their occasional separation from him had already been found in their experience eminently perilous to their stability and safety. Their courage, heroic in his presence, evaporated in his absence; and as they heard him foretell his departure, they naturally asked themselves—‘Who will now gather us, as a hen doth a brood under her wing? who will guide us in difficulties, direct us in perplexities, shelter us and console us in the hour and power of sorrow? His departure will be the extinction of our sun, the wreck of the vessel to which our all was entrusted, the blasting in short of all hope, the breath of fell despair.’

Jesus, in order to comfort them, said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not

come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you," John xvi. 7. How could it be so? Is it expedient that the parent should be torn from his offspring, the patron from his protégé, the master from his pupils, the bird from her callow brood? If the oak be cut down, must not the parasite plants that clung to it for support, and fed upon its juices, die? If the keystone be removed, must not the whole arch give way? Every analogy of life, every atom of experience, every heartstring within them, protested together that it was not expedient that Jesus should go away.

Yet beautifully and earnestly did Jesus reiterate—"I, who am the Truth—I, who never deceived you—I tell you it is expedient:" and whenever Christ speaks, all discussion should be closed; his word should outweigh all probabilities, as it is stronger than all law. It made the universe, and will outlive it; it sways the universe, and can bend and bow all its movements to its mighty purposes.

The departure of Christ was expedient, because his death was absolutely necessary: "It behoved him to suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day." He also said—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." An apostle also "opened and alleged that Christ must needs suffer, and rise again from the dead." The death of the victim was essential to the validity of the sacrifice. "Without shedding of blood there was no remission" of sin. It was expedient that the expiatory offerings of Levi should be finished—that the dim institutions of the ancient economy should be illustrated, and that the great atonement, promised by prophets, sung by psalmists, and panted

for by all creation, should be consummated. Such ancient promises as Isaiah xxxii. 15 must be fulfilled—"Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest;" Isaiah xlv. 3—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;" Joel ii. 28—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions;" John vii. 38—"He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" and John xiv. 16—"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

The great reason why it was expedient that Christ should go away was, therefore, that the Spirit, the Comforter, might come. This is shown by reference to Acts ii. 23—"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;" and Ephes. iv. 8—"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Christ must be removed, that the Comforter may come. So it ever must be: things dear and beautiful must fade, that better things may occupy their place. He who never knew what it is to be tossed to and fro, never learned what the preciousness of the Gospel is. The life of such an one must be like a smooth surface, from which the healing waters of the Gospel must glide off. When God takes the bud, how-

ever, it is that he may give the blossom ; and when he takes the green, it is that he may supply the ripe. Jesus therefore presented the apostles with the prospect of a glorious compensation, a blessed substitute for his absence. He said—‘Amid the crushing trials and dark hours of life, when human arms grow weary, and human sympathies expire—when the canopy above is all darkness, and the prospect before you all black, my Spirit shall rend the clouds, and reveal to you new glories, and breathe into your hearts a new inspiration, and your sorrowing hearts shall find what your glad hearts never sought, a peace which the world cannot give, and which it cannot take away.’

It was expedient that he should go away, in order that they might learn to “walk by faith.” Hitherto they had “walked by sight.” The feeling of all was the creed of Mary—“If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” They had hitherto believed only in One they saw and heard ; they had no trust in the far-off, no confidence in the unseen. Now, however, the outward restraints and props were to be withdrawn, that their inward principles might stand erect in their own strength ; the crutch was to be cast away, and the disciple was to walk alone. Their love must now burn as brightly in the absence as it did in the presence of Jesus. The carnal eye must close on a visible Saviour, and the spiritual eye must open to a Saviour within the veil, invisible to flesh and blood.

The *man* Christ Jesus was the utmost height to which their hearts had risen. The mountain-brow, the fisherman’s boat, the earthly temple, the crown of thorns, were the limits of their horizon. They had

now to pass through the manhood, and lean on the love of the unseen Godhead. Humanity must not be the soul's resting-place, but the medium through which it may reach its resting-place. It was therefore expedient that Jesus of Nazareth should retire, in order that the eternal Son of God might occupy his place—that the Lamb upon the cross should give way to the Lamb upon the throne—and the ear be shut to the infuriated cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," and open only to the hosannas of them "that do continually cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts."

It is the great error of the Church of Rome, as it is indeed the tendency of all humanity, to seek to keep a visible Christ. That church practically says—"It is not expedient that Jesus should go away, and therefore we must have a visible figure, a visible Calvary, a visible victim, holy robes and crucifixes." She, in fact, would rather "touch the hem of his garment," than believe in his name and be saved. Nevertheless, it was expedient that he should go away. We have lost the Saviour as the "Man of sorrows," to find him as the Son of God. The crucified is enshrined in the glorified. "If we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more" after the flesh.

It was expedient that Christ should go away, in order that the conversion of the ends of the earth might be hastened. As man he could be in one place only; there was a brilliant light, but it illumined Palestine only; there was a glorious beacon, but it was on one shore only. Rome slept in her midnight, Athens in darkness, and the whole earth in its cold aphelion; while one consecrated acre only glowed with

light. It was essential that this narrow sphere should be enlarged, and that no longer as a local light, but as "the Sun of righteousness," Jesus should take possession of his celestial throne, and pour down his beams upon Jew and Gentile.

It was expedient that Christ should go away, in order that the apostles might have an ampler field of ministry. As long as Jesus was on earth they clung to his person, and preached only within the range of his presence; they moved along the shores, but dared not launch out into the deep; theirs was the ministry of a parish, instead of the mission of the whole earth. His elevation from the midst of them was the removal of the visible central column, and the scattering of the apostles to the ends of the earth. All local and national ties, binding to a spot, were broken, and they went forth to preach on Mars' hill, as they had done on Mount Zion—the luminaries of the world, not merely the lights of Judæa; and to make every tongue, however barbarous or refined, the vehicle of "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The apostles themselves gave personal evidence on the day of Pentecost how expedient it was that Christ should go away. The contrast between Peter, the companion of his blessed Master, and Peter, the subject of the unction of the Holy Ghost, is most strikingly displayed. We find Peter, the fisherman and companion of Jesus, described in Matt. xiv. 28–31 — "And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and

beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xvi. 22 — "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Luke v. 8 — "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke xxii. 54 — "Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off." John xiii. 6 — "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" John xviii. 10 — "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear." And also we have Peter the apostle, after the day of Pentecost, portrayed in Acts ii. 14 — "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." Acts iii. 12 — "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" Acts iv. 8 — "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." It was not

miraculous gifts that made the difference. There was a progress in Divine life and light created, in consequence of the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and understandings of the apostles, so palpable that "he that runs may read." They saw Christ after his departure, as they had never seen him before, and they preached the truths of the Gospel with a fulness, a faithfulness, and a power, that prove incontestably they were the subjects of a new and Divine unction.

It may indeed be asked, "Was not the Spirit in the Jewish church as truly as in the Christian?" We answer,—He was as truly, but not as fully. As Christ was in the ancient church before his incarnation, so was the Spirit before his effusion at Pentecost. The incarnation was the manifestation of the fulness of Christ's life; the Pentecostal effusion was the manifestation of the Spirit's power.

May not the promise of the Spirit, let me ask, enable us also to make progress, not only in the clearer apprehension of truths we know, but in the full discovery of latent truths, that may have escaped us? We cannot, indeed, add to the Scripture, but we may nevertheless discover in it precious thoughts that have hitherto escaped us; we cannot add to the book of creation, and yet we may discover in it additional facts, richer harmony, new fibres running below and linking things the most remote with others the most near. The Bible is an exhaustless mine, and other ingots may yet be found in it—a sea whose floor is covered with gems and pearls, and he that dives deepest and oftenest will bring up the brightest. Progress in acquaintance with Divine truth, and in adjusting what seems conflicting, is, in fact, daily made. The Reformers had clearer

apprehensions of truth than the fathers, and we than the Reformers. True, the last century is not always in advance of its predecessor; our course is not continuously rectilinear. Like the course of a ship at sea, it is zigzag, but yet it is actual progress as a whole.

Certain portions of divine truth have always been clearly seen, because they have always been obtruded by the sacred penmen, in intense light and prominence; such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement; but there are other truths partly beyond the horizon, partly luminous, clearer conceptions of which we shall attain day after day.

It may also be expedient for us, as well as for the apostles, that Christ should go away, and that the human should shine far remote, amid the effulgence of the divine. We read his life; we are smitten with that magnificent example, that unequalled foot-print upon the sands of time, and are apt to forget his yet higher functions—his atoning death, his prevailing intercession, his enthronization and glory. It is expedient, therefore, that the example should be withdrawn for a little, that we may gaze without distraction on the atoning victim, and that even that atoning victim should be removed from earth, that we may behold in that victim the satisfying God.

He who sent the Comforter at first, still sends him. He sends him to transform and ripen his elect for glory. All the purchase of his blood is not yet gathered in; all the travail of his soul he has not yet seen; all the crowns destined for him are not yet on his head; all his guests are not yet seated at his table; all his jewels are not yet placed in their caskets. He can do what man's feeble voice is inadequate to do, imprint

on the heart the everlasting truths that now sound in the ears.

Behold the great privilege of the people of God! They are summoned to come near to God himself; the Holy Spirit is sent from God to bring his children by Christ to the presence of God. No earthly element or sacrament may come between; this is a blood-bought prerogative; "a stranger" may "not intermeddle" with it. We need not the lenses of the priest — the Spirit of God has touched the eye of our souls with eye-salve; we need not the anointings of man — for we have the unction of God; we need not the canonized urn — for we have access to the deep and illimitable sea; we can do without the priest's farthing candle — for it is our privilege to look upon the great central and celestial sun. In short, we are not left dependent for eternal life on any order of men; "that our faith may stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

"These words are faithful and true."

III.

The Work of the Comforter.

THERE can be no real prosperity in the Christian church, unless the Spirit of God create it; and that Spirit will not create amongst us true spiritual prosperity, unless we honor him by imploring it, pleading at the throne of mercy the promise of our blessed Lord, that when he should depart, “he would send him unto us.” If I read the Scriptures aright, every grace with which the Christian character is inlaid, derives all its beauty from his smile, and all its fragrance from his breath. He creates it. He nourishes it. He perfects it. His is the authorship, his the glory, and ours only all the comfort.

One of the very first offices of the Spirit of God, referred to in Holy Scripture, is that of enlightening the minds of his people. This is a most important work. By nature we are insensible alike to the glory of the Saviour and to the excellency of the gospel—to our own deep necessities, and to our real peril—to the duties that devolve upon us, or to the difficulties that beset us; but the Spirit of God, when he comes to us, in the energy of his grace, and in the exercise of his peculiar office, “turns us from darkness to light, and from the

power of Satan unto God." He rends the veil that obstructs our perception of celestial glory; he dissipates the blindness that clouds the natural man's mind, and that makes spiritual things foolishness to his eye, and strengthens its powers, and extends its focus. Hence, saith Scripture, "he translates us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Because of his work, it may be said of us, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." He proclaims at the commencement of the new, what he proclaimed at the commencement of the old creation, "Let there be light;" and the beams of an eternal Sun we never saw before, fall upon the human heart, and imprint with photographic instancy and accuracy upon every portion of that heart, the lineaments and likeness of Jesus. Great, therefore, is the difference between reading the Bible in the exercise of ordinary reason, and reading the Bible under the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit: the natural man reads it as a critic, the spiritual man reads it as a Christian: one *sees* in it what he sees in any authentic history — the presence and the portraiture of the creature; the other *feels* in it the touch, and participates through it of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ: the one sees eternal things through the hazy medium of prejudice and passion, the other in the still clear light of everlasting truth.

In the second place, the Spirit is represented in Scripture as the Spirit of adoption, making those in whom he dwells the "sons of God." We shall see the importance of this, if we consider that in Scripture we are represented as naturally "aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel," "enemies of God,

without God, and without Christ, and without hope in the world." And this is not merely the state of the most depraved; it is that of all by nature without exception; be we born in the lowliest hut, or in the noblest hall,—be we born where and from whom we may, we are all, without exception, born beneath the shadow of that curse, which was first projected from Paradise, and which remains the just and terrible inheritance of the whole family of man, in all lands and in all ages. We are all born, without exception, in a house, from every wall, and porch, and rafter of which, we have wickedly labored to efface the name and to extinguish the memorials of Deity, and every recess and avenue of which we have striven to render vocal with the praise and glory of man. But when the Spirit of God comes, and re-consecrates our hearts to be fanes for his residence, he makes ourselves "the sons of God." We "receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God." Hence, if there be a reader of this work who is a Christian indeed, he is so "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Man can make a theologian—God alone can make a Christian. I can argue—the Holy Ghost alone can convince and create.

In the third place, the Spirit of God is represented in Scripture as teaching us to pray. By nature we can no more express our spiritual wants than we can feel them. We are dead and dumb, and he who gives us the life of prayer, must give us the language too. "I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace and of supplications." "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh in-

tercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Throughout the Bible that blessed Spirit is represented as opening to our minds all the depths of their inherent weakness—awakening our souls to the multitude of our wants and our miseries, and unfolding to us the illimitable fulness of light and love treasured up in Jesus Christ. He inclines us to seek supply *there*, where alone our unutterable necessities may all be supplied.

In the fourth place, the Spirit of God is represented in Scripture as the Comforter. His name is, emphatically, "the Comforter." Hence it is said of the primitive Christians, "They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Again, he is spoken of as the author of "all joy and peace in believing." David, in his deepest affliction, prays, "Take not the Holy Spirit from me." Those torn feelings that the losses of the world have left behind, he alone can mitigate and remove. That aching vacuum which the departure of the dear, the near, and the cherished creates, he alone can supply. Those "ashes" he only can exchange for "beauty;" that broken heart he alone can bind up. Those tears which man may wipe *away*, but which will flow again in more full and frequent floods, the Spirit alone can wipe *out*. He only can awaken in the human heart the echoes of the glad tidings of everlasting joy—echoes so musical, so holy, that they shall not be spent upon the earth, but shall live and be audible until they touch the confines of heaven, and mingle with the jubilee of the blest for ever. He is the Comforter; and all the real comfort that is in the world is from him.

The Spirit of God is represented as operating not a

partial but a *total* change in the character of man. It is said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is written on the very threshold of the gospel of Christ. It is true of the worst man and of the best in this assembly; it is true of the man who is characterized by all the amiabilities of the fairest specimens of human nature; and it is equally true of the man who is deformed by the most repulsive qualities of the most repulsive of mankind; "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is made in regeneration a complete revolution in man's heart,—there is presented a new object for his affections, and a sublime motive for his actions,—a new and heavenly hope that dazzles by its splendor, and draws him upwards by its silent and powerful attraction, to a new home beyond the stars. "All things are become new." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," says the Apostle, "but according to his mercy he saves us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Hence, it is not more necessary that our sins should be forgiven by a Saviour's blood, than it is that our hearts should be renewed by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's work.

The Spirit of God is also represented as maintaining all life and holiness in the believer. The Spirit of God, says the apostle, "dwells in us." "Know ye not," he says again, "that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Solomon said that he felt it the most wonderful thing, that God should dwell in the splendid temple he had reared; and I am sure that every Christian must feel it a still more stupendous exhibition of his love, that he should condescend to dwell in a human

heart which had once revolted from him. But that Spirit must dwell there, if we are to be saved. Nothing less than Omnipotence can save us from falling. We live in the midst of an uncongenial world; we are surrounded by all hostile influences; and as nothing but a Divine power can make us Christians—so nothing less than a Divine power can keep us so. He creates our Christianity, he continues that Christianity, and finally crowns it.

The Spirit of God is represented in Scripture as the bond of all spiritual communion. "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit," says the apostle. We are, as believers, "one body," and "one spirit." And again: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost be with you." In short, the possession of the Spirit of God is described in Scripture as the possession of all conceivable and possible good. He is represented as taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us; taking of the difficulties of the Scripture, and enabling us to understand them; helping us to the first movement of faith, inspiring into us the least pulse of love, animating us with the last vision of hope, and finally "crowning us with a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

I have thus run briefly over some of the functions attributed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. I desire now to obviate, if possible, some misconceptions which are entertained upon this subject.

It is not the work of the Spirit of God to blot out any of those aboriginal faculties of the soul, with which man was originally endowed by his Maker; nor is it the work of the Spirit of God to add to man's intel-

lectual or moral economy any new faculties, of which he was not possessed before. This would be to alter our state, and thereby our obligations, altogether. The law that bound us once, would not bind us now, if so be that we receive a different moral constitution. We must be the same subjects to be continued beneath the obligation of the same unchanged and unchangeable law. The Spirit of God annihilates no faculty within us, and he creates no new one. We are not extinguished that we may be renewed. We have within us, even in the depth of our ruin, all our pristine capabilities of angel beauty, holiness, and greatness. We are marred and wrecked and ruined, but within us still are original faculties, that Adam had in Eden, clouded and weakened, but not consumed, the essential groundwork of that magnificent character which shall be developed in glory, and unfolded in all the forms of beauty and holiness and happiness.

The Spirit of God does not create within us a new reasoning faculty. The man who is a stranger to the Gospel, and the man who is under its power, have substantially the same reasoning powers within them. God says to the sinner, "Come now, let us *reason* together." If the fallen man had no reasoning faculty within him, he could not reason with God, nor could God reason with him; he could not be the responsible subject of divine remonstrance and appeal. Our reason is dimmed in its brightness, broken in its power, shorn of much of its pristine glory, but it exists still. The strings of the mind are untuned, its primeval melodies suspended, but when the finger of God shall retouch it, all its discords will be silenced, and its primeval and awful harmonies will be evolved, responding to the universal harmony of the restored universe around it.

When God the Spirit makes the change to which I am alluding, he does not create within us a conscience. Every man, without exception, the worst or the best, the greatest felon or the noblest philanthropist, has within him a faculty that responds to the feelings of right or wrong, just as he has within him a faculty that responds to the true and the false. We see this faculty in the sensual Herod, who thought he saw a John the Baptist whom he had iniquitously murdered, in every person whose name was whispered in public. We see it also in the brethren of Joseph, awakened to its awful action within them, when they recollected their treatment of their innocent and unoffending brother. The Spirit of God opens its eye, purifies it, retouches and restores its pristine strength and excellency, but does not create it. In short, it is not necessary to destroy humanity, in order to regenerate it; it is not necessary to degrade the creature to the level of the demon, in order to honour and to glorify the God who raises it to the dignity of sonship.

The Holy Spirit does not make holiness obligatory upon us as new creatures, more truly than it was obligatory upon us before. He does not make it more obligatory upon the Christian to be holy, than upon the unbeliever to be holy. It is not true, that you, the rejecters of the Gospel, are exempt from the obligations of God's holy law; and that those who embrace the Gospel are specially, and differently from what they were before, amenable to the law—liable to its penalties, or entitled especially to its rewards. Without exception we are under law—its grasp is on all created beings. All its obligations are upon us. It commands the greatest sinner upon the earth, and the greatest

saint in glory. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," lies on all. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is as obligatory upon the guilty as it is upon the regenerate; and the reason why the response is not universal, is not our weakness, and therefore our misfortune, but our wickedness, and therefore our crime.

The Holy Spirit, when he makes these changes in the character of a man, does not destroy all freedom of action. One class of men deify human effort, another class degrade the human soul; one party would make man his own Saviour, another party would make man a mere brute machine. He is neither. Man is a free and responsible being; he works willingly what he does; the freedom of his will is not crushed by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. I appeal to every Christian in this assembly. The Spirit has touched your heart, he has changed your affections, he has altered the whole man; but you were so little conscious of any coercive power exercised by his presence, that you did not know he had changed your heart until you beheld the magnificent and blessed results that follow. It is not the Holy Spirit that repents, or that believes—it is we that repent, it is we that believe; and yet, while we repent and believe, the Holy Spirit has all the glory of that grace, and all the honour of its development.

The presence and operation of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts does not paralyse human effort. The apostle evidently supposes, that he who leans most upon the Spirit of God, is just the man who will most be characterised by active and strenuous exertion; for he says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." Thus the logic of the Christian differs from the logic of the world; we need the Spirit of God to make us right logicians, as well as to make us true Christians. The world draws the inference—"The Spirit of God does all; therefore we must do nothing;" the apostle draws the inference—"The Spirit of God does all; therefore we must do much." A farmer knows that unless there are rains, and brilliant suns, and blue and cloudless skies, there will be no golden harvest; let him sow as he pleases, and till and watch and weed as he pleases, he knows that it is absolutely impossible that there can be any good result, if the sun should suspend his beams, or the clouds withhold their rain-drops; and yet, because he knows this, he does not sow the less diligently, nor plough the less laboriously, nor weed the less carefully. God's law is this, in the temporal and spiritual provinces both,—terrestrial effort to its utmost, and yet a celestial blessing without which all is vain. God's great law is, that we shall toil as if all depended upon human strength, and yet we shall look and lean and pray as if all absolutely depended upon a celestial blessing. Hence in the Song of Solomon we read—"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" Here you have the posture of the church of Christ—"leaning"—conscious that she would fall and perish if she did not lean; yet walking—"coming up"—conscious that if she did not, she would make no progress: the church in Solomon's days presenting the beautiful combination of leaning upon Christ's arm, without which she must lie down and

perish—and yet walking in Christ's way, without which she will never with Christ inherit everlasting glory.

Let me notice, in the next place, what I believe is contrary to the sentiments of a very considerable class who have lately appeared, — that the Holy Spirit of God acts directly and immediately upon the heart of man. The opinion of some excellent persons (eminent Christians I believe many of them to be, but mistaken, I think, in this part of their theology,) is, that the Spirit of God is so tied to God's word, that wherever the word is heard, there of necessity the Spirit must act, and that the only influence we can conceive exerted by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, is that which accompanies, and is inherent in, the read or the preached word. There are serious objections to this view—objections that go, I think, to overturn it; and such as must strike us at once. First, infants, we know, are regenerated by the Spirit of God; there are in the case of infants that die, and of infants that are spared, instances of infant regeneration; and if we admit that one infant is renewed by the Spirit of God, it must be by a process that does not require the contact or connexion of the word preached or read, because infants are incapable of listening to the one, or of perusing the other. Let me illustrate this also by the instance of seed: Suppose a farmer sows the most excellent seed in an utterly barren soil; what is required to make that seed grow is, not that the seed should be invested with a greater amount of vitality within it, nor that the sunbeams should receive greater intensity; for the intenser the beams that shine upon the land, the less productive it would become: what is required is, not a change in the seed that is sown, nor in the *sunbeams* that play

upon it, but in the *soil* that receives the seed. It is so in the preaching of the Gospel: it is not a change in the Gospel, which is good seed, that is required; nor in the means of grace, which are also good, abundant, and scriptural; the change required is a direct action upon the soil, or the heart, that receives the seed, and then the seed will germinate, and there will be golden prolific harvests. The Spirit of God must first, prior to the scattering of the seed, or the shining of the sunbeams, change the heart and make it meet for the reception of the seed. Or, to present this truth in another point of view: suppose a wall intercepted the light of the sun from my window, and therefore from my room; what would be required in order to enable me to have the full sunbeams playing into my room would be, not that they should shine with greater intensity upon that wall—which would only harden it the more—but that the wall should be pulled down. It is so with the preaching of the Gospel: it is not that the Spirit of God should make the truth more vivid, or its motives more glorious, but that he should remove the wall of prejudice and passion, which obstructs the entrance of that word which “giveth light.” It is plain, then, that the Spirit of God first influences the heart, before it can receive spiritual things. Hence, we read, that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;” moved first by the Spirit, then speaking what they were taught. We read again, “The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And again: “The Holy Spirit shall teach you in that same hour what ye ought to say:” implying, clearly, the

previous influence of the Spirit before they can say what ought to be said, or know what is necessary to salvation.

I may also notice, that the Holy Spirit, thus promised by the Saviour, abides with his church for ever. Its great and most illustrious pillars may be swept away; its ornaments and its props may totter, and its lights fade; but the Spirit of God is to “abide with us for ever.”

IV.

Special Mission of the Comforter.

I NOW enter upon some of the personal offices of the Holy Spirit. One chief office which he is represented as sustaining is that of the Comforter.

The propriety or justice of the translation of the original word for Comforter has been the subject of dispute. In the original it is, literally rendered, *the Paraclete*. The very same word is also applied to our Lord, in the Epistle of St. John, where it is said, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." The original word is — "*Paraclete* with the Father;" not the word usually applied to our blessed Lord, denoting that he is an Intercessor, but another, which denotes that he is a Comforter. The strict meaning of *Paraclete* is something like that which we attach to the name "advocate" in Scotland—one that identifies himself with another, takes up another's cause, throws all his energies and sympathies into it, and makes that cause his own, and upholds or proves it a good and a righteous one. But this is not all. There is embodied in it the element of comfort or consolation also; and this attribute is so interwoven with our convictions of the office of the Holy Spirit, that we should not be willing to part with so precious a thought.

There is in this world great necessity, not merely for such comfort as the promises of the Gospel may convey, but for comfort so vast and varied, that it needs nothing short of a divine person to convey and to impress it on the sad and sorrowing heart. We live in a world in which we need a Comforter. Much there is that is beautiful on earth, but much also that is forlorn. There is no street in this world without its sick-bed; there is no corner of the city without its physician; there is no turning that leads not to a cemetery; and there is no cemetery that is without its graves of all lengths and durations. There is not a pillow, in the happiest home on which the sun shines, that has not a thorn in it; there is not a heart in which there is not some cankering and vexing feeling, known best and most intimately to itself. One great lesson disclosed by Christianity is impressed upon the experience of every man, in some shape,—“Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” We are prone to fancy that every man’s lot is better than our own: and the reason of this is, that we are dazzled by the mere spangles and glare of circumstance; whereas, if we could penetrate the purple, or look beneath the ermine, or see under the lawn, we should find that there are unhappy and restless hearts beating there, just as heavily as anywhere else. Poor men are often happier in their cabins than royal men are in their palaces, or noblemen in their halls. But be we where we may, there is only one thing that can make us really happy—that thing which quells all fears within, and triumphs over all fightings without—the possession of the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God.

The promise that is here given by our blessed Lord

shows us that we are, in this world, however varied may be its afflictions, capable of comfort. In the regions of the lost there is no capacity, as well as no possibility of comfort; but as long as we are amid the means of grace, there is no sorrow so severe that it cannot be assuaged; there are no tears that can be sown in spring, which shall not bloom in autumn into harvests of joy. As the great revelation of the Gospel is, that there is no sin which cannot be forgiven, so there is no sorrow which cannot be assuaged; as there is no sinner, whose crimes are so deep in their dye that the blood of Jesus cannot take them all away, so there is no weeper whose wound is so painful, and whose sorrow is so poignant, that the blessed Comforter cannot heal it.

The Holy Spirit is not only capable of affording comfort, but able and willing to afford it. That he is able, is evident from the fact which I have shown, that that Spirit is God. His consolations are omnipotent consolations. All earthly comfort is represented by a cistern, a thing of finite dimensions, and which needs continually to be filled; nay, it is represented, even when sweetest and purest, by "a broken cistern," that leaks and lets out its comforts hour by hour: but the consolations that the Gospel ministers to those that need them, are represented by the illimitable and exhaustless main, or the great, the self-originating and overflowing fountain. The consolations of the world are the consolations of the footstool; those of the Gospel are the consolations of the throne; the former evaporate like the dew, beneath the beams of the approaching sun; the latter grow and increase in quantity, the

more liberally they are drawn and drunk by the children of men.

This Comforter is called not only a Comforter but "the Spirit of truth." Here lies a very important distinction, which needs to be impressed; it is, that the Holy Spirit will only comfort man as "the Spirit of truth." A lie may serve as a momentary opiate, but there is in it nothing of real or of permanent comfort. Hence the comfort which the world gives, but lulls or deadens for an hour; but the comfort which the Holy Spirit of God gives, lasts for ever. The comfort which the world gives, is like the opiate weed, that makes us forget our pain; the comfort which the Spirit of God gives, is a flower that blooms upon the stem of everlasting truth, borrows its perennial fragrance from the skies, and remains green, and fair, and beautiful, when all the flowers of mortality are withered and gathered to a common grave. In other words, the Spirit of God will only give comfort through the medium, or in the vehicle of truth. If this be so, let us never attempt to comfort a dying sinner by telling him a lie; let us never shrink from telling the dying the whole truth, under the idea that to tell them all the truth will make them wretched. Better there should be wretchedness felt, in the knowledge of God's truth, than that there should be comfort dreamed of in the belief of man's lie; better that there should be disquiet the most saddening to those that are around, rather than the "Peace, peace," when, "saith my God, there is no peace" at all.

Having noticed these features in the revelation of the Holy Spirit of God, as the Comforter of his church,

let me refer to instances, in which we may presume that this blessed Comforter will exercise especially his consolatory function.

Is there some true, but humble Christian, who trembles and fears lest, after all, his sins are not forgiven, nor his iniquities blotted out? How does the Spirit of God, as "the Spirit of truth," bring comfort to that Christian? He will not, as the world does, tell him that sin is a very trivial thing, or that there is nothing in the condemnation of the law which ought to alarm, agitate, or frighten him. The world will say to the dying sinner—"You have done your duty in the sphere in which you have been placed; your life has been most respectable; at least you are not as bad as that man, and certainly you have as good a chance and as bright a hope as this man!" The Spirit comforts not so; when the Spirit of God comforts, he comforts by conveying to such a doubting sinner the whole truth. And what is it? He "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them" to that sinner, according to the promise of the Gospel, made by our blessed Lord; he shows him the precious blood, which now, as when shed on Calvary, "cleanseth from all sin;" he speaks to that dying man's heart what I can only speak to his ear; he breathes into that heart tones taken from the jubilee of heaven; he makes the very music of the skies resound in the depths of that human heart:—"Son," "daughter," "be of good cheer; thy sins," through Jesus Christ, "are forgiven thee."

But not only does he show this forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Christ, but he shows to the humbling, doubting, trembling, yet believing Christian, a right and a title to the skies, which nothing else can be

a substitute for. He not only shows him that the curse is taken away by a Saviour's blood, but also that his title to heaven is restored, by the sufficiency of a Saviour's righteousness. Christ's atonement delivers us from the curse—Christ's obedience entitles us to a blessing. By the one our breaking of the law is put away; by the other, our obedience to the law is presented. "He who knew no sin, is made sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God by him."

Thus, then, the Comforter, as "the Spirit of truth," comforts the depressed with a knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and of the sufficiency of the righteousness of Jesus.

All of us, however healthy and strong, must one day lie down and die. There is not a flower so fair, that must not, like the flower of the grass, be withered. Let us not forget, that the only thing which can give us comfort on a death-bed is this,—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bore our curse and obeyed the law which we had broken; and by his suffering we are saved from that curse, and by his righteousness we are entitled to an everlasting blessing.

The sense of sin that agitates the Christian, in the hands of Satan might plunge him in despair, or precipitate him into presumption; but the sense of sin, when it is laid hold upon by the teaching of the Holy Spirit of God, only leads us to a deeper, richer sense of the Saviour's mercy. And hence, while our sins appear to us, as they must appear in the intense light of eternity, like the great mountains, that Holy Spirit reveals to our heart a Saviour's mercy, which appears like a yet greater sea, that can bury and entomb them all.

There may be some one who is constrained to say, 'All God's providential dealings are against me; I have been afflicted, I am a sufferer, I have lost the loved and the dear; my estate has been swept from me, the home that I built and under which I hoped to die has been stripped, the property which I accumulated, and which was the fruit of my industry, has been torn away as by a whirlwind; and I am desolate.' My dear brother, the Spirit of God is the Comforter that you need. He can show to your heart, what I now show to your eye and to your understanding; that the hand of God may be heavy upon you, while the heart of God overflows with love to you. Nay, we are told that suffering is not a sign or an evidence of a curse, but a privilege: "To you," he says, "it is given to suffer;" and again, "Whom the Lord loveth"—what? He makes prosperous and happy? No—"whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If there be one man whose life has been one of uninterrupted prosperity, that man has most need to tremble; but if there be one whose life has been a series of successive and all but crushing calamities, he should lift up his head to the everlasting hills, and read written by the Spirit of God, upon those tablets which man's hand cannot deface, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Have you lost your property? God remains. Are you poor in time? It may be in order that you may be rich in eternity. Has your estate perished? It may be in order that your soul may be saved. Has the gourd been cut down in a night? It may be to lead you to repose beneath the shadow of the Rock of ages—the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour. And these precious truths the Spirit

of God takes; and he does what I cannot do—imprints them on the heart, and helps those who know them in their heads to feel them as living, vital realities in their inmost souls.

Are you placed, as a Christian, under reproaches? Are you calumniated? Are you misrepresented in the discharge of duties which you feel to devolve upon you? Are you exposed to the proud man's contumely and the coarse man's scorn? In standing up in the sphere in which Providence has placed you, and protesting against what is wrong, and contending for what is right, are you liable to misrepresentation, calumny, and mockery? There is One who can comfort you under it; the Spirit of God will remind you of that text—"For thy sake I have borne reproach." Christ's name was taken away before his life. He was persecuted and crucified in his name, before he was crucified in his person. And we are told by Peter, what the Spirit of God can impress upon us, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ"—what? Sad are ye? To be pitied are ye? No; "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." And on what account? Because you do not care? Because you are stoical enough to be impenetrable? or because you have excitements enough around you to divert you? No; "for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." Here is the consolation. If there be one spot upon the earth on which that heavenly Dove rests, and spreads his overshadowing wings, and diffuses all the fragrance of the sky, it is the heart of a reproached, calumniated man. And, therefore, "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

Some may say—‘Once indeed we had all the sensations of Christian happiness; we were full of joy, when first we knew the Lord; but all these feelings have become deadened, and all those joys have palled.’ There is comfort in that Comforter for you. When you first emerged from darkness to light, you were dazzled by the glorious change; your excitement and your joy were commensurate with that change. Your eyes have now been accustomed to its splendor; you have lived and rejoiced long amid its glories. You must not expect that the enthusiasm of your youth will last through your riper and maturer years. It may be, that the strong emotions which burst from your heart in the dawn of your Christian life, may have sobered down into that deep, steadfast, and enduring principle which is more precious than all. Do not forget that the absence of joy is not necessarily the loss of an interest in Christ. It is possible to be a son, and yet to be sorrowful: it is possible to have nothing in possession, but beyond the skies, and in bright and blessed reversion, to have a “crown of glory that fadeth not away.” May the Spirit of God imprint that upon our hearts! For what is wanted in our churches is not more light, which the minister can give, but more life, which the Spirit of God alone can give. And I am quite sure of this, that if there were in our pews more of secret prayer that God would accompany his truth with his own power, there would be richer and more blessed spectacles exhibited by the whole church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some feel that once they seemed to live, as it were, beneath the sunshine of the countenance of God; all things seemed bright and merry as the summer-

day; but all this, they feel, has utterly departed. They think that God has at length forsaken them, and their God has finally forgotten them. They are cast down, and dejected and depressed, and appear occasionally trembling on the verge of despair. If there be any such a reader of this page let him intimate a distinction, which I can explain, but which the Comforter alone can impress so as to comfort you: there may be day-light when there is no sun-light. This is the experience of every one. God gives the sun-light, when it is most seasonable for the ripening of the fruits of the earth; but he gives the day-light according to his everlasting and irreversible covenant. Your sun-light may be removed for good and gracious ends, but your day-light may still be continued. Sun-light is assurance, which is the privilege of the few; day-light is salvation, which is the real possession of all true Christians. God may not give us the first, because it is inexpedient for us; God will not withdraw from us the last, for it is his own promise to continue it. God may sustain us the most, even with "the everlasting arms," whilst he comforts us with the least. Our Lord upon the cross was sustained completely, whilst he was not comforted at all. "*My God, My God*"—there was his sustaining grasp; "Why hast thou forsaken me?"—there is the absence of all consolation. Thus it will be still; as it was with the Master, so it will be with the servant—as it was with Christ, so it will be with the Christian. Our faith may be strong, and God's hold of us unchangeable, whilst our comforts may be low and our consolations few. If God the Spirit will be pleased to impress this upon a Chris-

tian's heart, it is a lesson more precious than the gold of Inde, or the perfumes of "Araby the blessed."

Is there some believer who says and feels—"I am harassed with temptation?" Every Christian must be conscious of temptation. Do not thoughts sometimes originate within you, which have no sooner spread their dim and distant shades into shape and reality, than you hate, and abhor, and shrink from them? Have not even atheistical thoughts, sceptical and infidel and unholy thoughts, swept through your minds and grieved your hearts, whilst you were conscious of their presence? So it has been, and so it will be. "Think it not strange," says the apostle, "concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened to you." Job was tempted and tried; the royal psalmist had the discords of Satan thrown into his sweetest songs; and if you were without such temptations, you would be without evidence that you belonged to the great family of Christ. Satan lets the weed alone—he tries only to corrupt, and blast, and wither the flower. Satan, sure of his own, gives his own undisturbed peace; but the instant that the prey begins to escape from his fangs, and the victim of his wiles rises to become a son of God, Satan interposes to tempt, to try, to curse, and to destroy. "Think it not strange." The Spirit of God will open your eyes, to see Christ interceding for you in heaven, whilst you are struggling on earth, as Moses interceded on the mountain, whilst the Israelites were warring in the valley below. Whilst we are toiling at the oar, and contending with the stormy and tempestuous sea, Christ is on the mountain-side, as of old, praying, or marching upon

the mountain-waves, and making the angry sea a pathway to come and deliver his own. Poor human nature, since the days of the apostles, cries in its agony — “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The Holy Spirit teaches that nature now, as he taught it in the days of Paul, to say — “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Thus, the Spirit comforts believers. He is the Comforter — Christ always the subject of his comfort; or, in other words, the Spirit is the Comforter as “the Spirit of truth,” and only by the truth does he comfort believers.

Let me notice a few corollaries to be drawn from the remarks I have already made.

The Holy Spirit is the best and most precious Comforter of all. All the consolations of time may decay, or become diluted; but the Spirit of God says, in the words breathed through the lips of Jeremiah — “I satisfy the weary soul, I replenish the sorrowful soul.” The Spirit of God takes, if I may so express myself, a leaf from the tree of life, and lays that leaf close upon the broken heart of the humble and sorrowing believer. That Holy Spirit takes the truths that are radiated from the Sun, and something like a great discovery in the age in which we live, makes the very beams that come from “the Sun of righteousness” print and impress the likeness of the glorious Original upon the living tablets of believers’ hearts. His consolations penetrate the heart, as the dews and the rains of heaven penetrate the willing soil. The heart grows happy, and the soil becomes prolific. “I will,” says he to Hosea, “allure her into the wilderness, and

“speak comfortably to her;” so it is in our translation, but it is literally and strictly translated, — “speak to her heart.”

The Holy Spirit is the best Comforter, because he cannot misapprehend or mistake the real case of believers. We are well aware, that if one is labouring under some bodily disease, and if the physician, by the frailty of humanity and the ignorance of human science, should mistake the disease, and prescribe for one a prescription that is only applicable to another, he aggravates the malady, instead of curing it; and very frequently when a brother mourns under sorrow of heart, or depression, or calamity, we, poor miserable comforters, go to him and aggravate his sorrow, instead of assuaging it. When we meet with some one who mourns deeply and bitterly because of an overwhelming loss, I believe that under such loss the less we say the better; there is something so great in the calamity, and something so little in all our comforts, that we had better be silent. And when we do speak in order to comfort, let us never say—‘Do not weep; it cannot be helped.’ This will not comfort—it will only embitter the sorrow. Admit the calamity to be sore, admit the grief to be just and only adequate to the occasion; but point to the eternal Fountain that overflows with compensatory joy; draw the heart from the green sod on which it lingers, to the bright throne on which Jesus sits. Bring that spirit from communion with the dead, that provokes only its tears, to communion with a living Saviour, who can wipe all those tears away. And because the Holy Spirit knows all things, as the omniscient and omnipresent Spirit of God, he may appoint that which afflicts us—but it will be that which is best

for us. He may contradict our plans, he may withhold our wishes, but he will nevertheless order all wisely, and bestow all mercifully. Leave that Spirit to his own way, and he will spread his wings over the troubled chaos of the wrecked and shattered heart, and bring order out of chaos, harmony out of discord, and light out of darkness.

The Spirit of God is the best comforter, because others, however adequate, may be unable to reach us; he never can be unable. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uppermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me." And therefore the consolations of the Spirit of God can descend to the miner in his subterranean walks, can rise to the Alpine herdsman on the loftiest peak, can minister consolation to the captive in his cell, and impart everlasting joy to that silent and solitary weeper, whose sorrows are too big for expression, and whose griefs can find no tears or a channel for their exit. There is no sorrow so hidden, that the Holy Spirit cannot see it; there is no weeper so distant, that that Spirit cannot reach him.

Other comforters may be weary. The comforter by the bed of the dying may grow tired; the hand may weary in presenting that cup; the heart may faint and fail in the expression of those sympathies. But this blessed Comforter never wearies: "I, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faint not, neither am weary."

Other comforters are frequently withdrawn when their comforts are most needed. The consolations of the earth are, from their very nature, transient and temporary; they are like the summer brooks, that are fed by the summer showers,—they rush, full and overflowing, for a day, and then leave their channels dry. But the consolations which the Holy Spirit gives, are like those streams which are fed by the glaciers, full in the summer, when other streams are dry and other fountains exhausted.

To you, who are the people of God, what elements of comfort are there in that blessed Gospel with which you are acquainted! Can that spirit sink amid the stormy waves of the world, that has an omnipotent arm to lean on? Can that soul be without comfort, in the deep cells of which are sounding the very echoes of the voice of God? Can that man despair, who feels that he is the friend of Jesus—the protégé of the Most High? Is it not unspeakable comfort, that the Holy Spirit—the Comforter himself—dwells in the depths of my heart, and makes that heart a fane and a temple for his residence? Shall I desecrate that temple by a suspicion, shall I darken it by a doubt, that he who is the omnipotent Comforter, cannot comfort me? “Blessed,” then, “are the people that know the joyful sound; happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

By some reader it may be said, “Doth he not speak parables?” All will seem mystery to some, fanaticism to others, and extravagance to more. Christians will feel that what I have spoken is truth, and that my sentiments have awakened echoes of sweet music within them; but those who are not Christians—(and it is not uncharitable to suspect that there may be some such

reader—for baptism does not make us Christians; going to the Lord's table does not make us Christians; having a pew in the house of God does not make us Christians; wearing the name, and speaking the shibboleth, and being covered with the badge of a party, does not make us Christians. The Spirit of God changing the heart, alone can make us Christians:—may feel that all I said is a mystery, there is no response to it in their hearts; they cannot understand it; it is as if I were writing demonstrations in a character which they cannot read, or speaking in a tongue which they do not understand. Perhaps this will teach you. You have sorrow, for which you have no balm; you have troubles, which nothing upon earth has comforted you under; you yourselves feel that you are dying, and passing to the judgment-seat of God. What have you instead of the Gospel? What comfort can you appeal to, richer than the consolations of the great Comforter himself? Compare what you have to cling to, with what a Christian has; and the comparison may prompt you to lay hold on his garment, and beg him to allow you to go with him, for he alone has that which can do you good. I ask you what you have to go to in that hour of trial? Mother, when you lose your babe, what comforts you? Child, when you lose your parent, what comforts you? Husband, when you lose your wife, what comforts you? What have you to look to? Where are you? Whither are you going? What explains this tangled web of human life? Where is the light that will open up all its mystery? Where is the fountain that will give comfort in any of its troubles? Stoicism cannot; human nature cannot; kings and queens and emperors cannot. But this blessed book can. It points to a

home beyond the skies, from which no vicissitude can pluck your dear and cherished ones away; and a Comforter who tells you of one that shall be more than father and mother, and sister and brother, and husband and wife—Jesus Christ—“all our salvation, and all our desire.” Ask him, the Comforter, to teach you the mystery, for he is the Teacher also.

V.

The Great Conviner of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment

A PRECIOUS office of the Holy Spirit, not second in importance to any of those we have already discussed, is described by John in these prophetic words : —

“And when the Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” — John xvi. 8–11.

The word “reprove” is not the exact rendering of the original, and in fact does not convey its specific, deep and peculiar meaning. The reproof of sin has been the practice of philosophers, the song of poets, the topic of preachers. Every excellence reproves by its existence that which is its opposite. A parent reproves his children, silent virtue reproves obtrusive vice, but this reproof is not correction. Sin is repulsed by reproof, it is not eradicated. It is silenced by the eloquence of the rebuke, but it is not, therefore, subdued. The wind blows on the bleak hill; the hill is not wasted or worn by its action: the waves beat against the hard

rock, but the hard rock remains the same. So man's heart may be reproved, and yet it will not repent; he may be silenced, but not convinced, or convicted savingly of sin. The true meaning of the word, therefore, is not "reprove," it does not go deep enough, but "convict" or "convince." "He shall convict or convince of sin;" that is, he shall bring home to our judgments and to our conscience, and render real within, the testimony to which we give ear without. It means, he will work into the heart such a deep sense of sin, its detestableness, its injury, God's great dislike of it, that we too shall hate it, and shrink from it.

None can convince the heart of sin but the Holy Spirit. The preacher may carry the judgment; some providential stroke may impress the feelings; but the Holy Spirit alone can impress the heart with that deep and indelible—growingly deep and indelible—sense of sin which is here declared to be one of his great functions, and on which is laid the foundation of the hopes and the salvation of all that believe. The conscience has often tried to convince man of sin; and the conscience is, no doubt, a most powerful preacher. It protests against the sin that you indulge in, but the practice of the sin goes on, notwithstanding its protests. And after conscience has urged for a little, protested for a season, disappointed, beaten back, and overcome, it at last falls asleep, and ceases in despair to protest any longer; and when at intervals it is awakened a little to a sense of what sin is, and leads to, and what its pains and its penalties must be, it only rubs its eyes, counts its beads, says its Pater Nosters, and falls asleep again; the conscience becoming seared and har-

dened, and in very despair giving up the hopeless task of convincing the heart of sin.

The Law is equally unsuccessful. It thunders its "Shalt not," and "Shalt;" but it has no effect upon the sinner, he trembles like the Israelites for a little, and when the thunder is hushed, and the lightnings are laid, he returns again to his sin; or if the Law drives him from the practice of one sin, it only leaves him to the mercy of another. But when the Holy Spirit begins the work that conscience has resigned in despair, and undertakes the duty that the Law has shown itself ineffective to discharge, then does he so impress the heart and the conscience, and the intellect — the whole man — with an apprehension of what sin is, what sin leads to, how hateful and detestable it is in the sight of a holy and a pure God, that the sinner, alarmed at its power, sick of its poison, wearied with its pains, its toils, its drudgery, flees to him who can take it away by the efficacy of his precious blood, and uproot it by the power of his almighty and his glorious arm.

But whilst it is the great function of the Holy Spirit, to convince of sin, in general, we must notice that one special sin is singled out by our blessed Lord, as the especial subject of the reproof, or, as we propose to render it, conviction. What is that sin? It must be a dominant one, if not the dominant one, in order to be pointed out as the sin that the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven to convict the conscience of. It says, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." In other words, it is the sin of unbelief. There are sins that society takes cognisance of, and blames men for; there are sins that society, in its blindness, does not notice

nor care for: but this sin of unbelief, society takes no notice of at all. It cannot understand that a man should be lost because he does not believe a dogma, as they call it; or that another man should be saved because he does believe a dogma; and they say, "It is not in our power or option to believe what another believes; it is a logical conclusion of the intellect, the result of proof, and not of a volition that we ourselves can exercise. And yet our blessed Lord says that the Spirit's first function is to convince mankind of sin — and of this primary and maternal sin — the sin of unbelief, or 'because they believed not on me.'" It is very remarkable, as we read the rest of the Bible, that we find this sin singled out as endued with peculiar intensity. We see faith constantly spoken of as the leading grace, and unbelief constantly quoted as the leading sin; not because in themselves the one is so intense a virtue, and the other so deep a sin: but because of what they involve, what they necessarily lead to; the fruits that grow from, and the blossoms borne by the one, and the deadly apples of Sodom and Gomorrah that grow upon the branches that belong to the other. This unbelief has this peculiar guilt, that it is our refusal to be what we were made originally to be — one with God. It is not true that it is an intellectual thing only; it is as much a thing of heart, and feeling, and conscience, and will. Thousands will not believe a truth because it is not convenient to believe; our wishes are often stronger than our logic; what we want to be true, because it suits our passions, we conclude illogically enough, but intensely enough, to be truth, and suitable to us. This unbelief, then, is our refusal to be what God meant us originally to be—one with Him.

Unbelief is preferring the land of our exile, to our everlasting and our blessed home : it is loving the hulks of the penal colony, more than the home and habitation of our Father's house. It is preferring the convict dress of sin to the best robe, and the ring on the finger, and the shoes on the feet ; it is saying, it was not worth God's while so to love us, that he gave Christ to die for us ; it is telling God we do not need his mercy, and we decline it ; it is saying, it was not necessary that Christ should die ; we could have been happy without him ; it is declaring that martyrs shed their blood for a crotchet, that heaven and earth have been created for a mere whim, and that there is nothing in the Bible, nor in God's inspiration of it, that demands the reverence and belief of us, or that can contribute to our present elevation, or our future happiness and dignity hereafter.

This is what unbelief is : it is what the sacred penman proclaims it — calling God a liar : and it is followed by the doom that our blessed Lord himself has pronounced, when he says, “He that believeth not shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth upon him.” If we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, in the 2d, 3d, and 4th chapters, we shall find, that the great drift and obvious design of the preaching of Peter, was to stir in the hearts of his auditory a conviction of sin. Every sermon that he preached seems to have had this tendency. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know : him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked

hands have crucified and slain.” There was his attempt to awaken conviction of sin. And what was the result of it, by the blessing of the Spirit of God? “Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart,” —that is, the Spirit convinced them of sin — “and they said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” So, again, in Acts iii. 13, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” This was, again, another attempt to convict them of sin. So again, in Acts iv. 10, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” And then Peter stood up with the rest of the apostles, and said, (as we read in the 26th verse,) “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy

word.” Whether in his prayer, or in his preaching, there is the constant desire and attempt, on the part of Peter, to impress upon their hearts a sense of the greatness, the heinousness, and the terrible consequences of the sin they had perpetrated. We never shall be able to render the news of a Saviour glad music to the hearts of them that hear it, or the blessings that are the purchase of his precious blood, or welcomed and cherished, till, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit of God, there has been produced in our hearts that deep conviction of the sin and peril of unbelief, as well as of other sins, that cleave to us all,—which is the best preparation for the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. And whenever one’s mind is awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of his past unbelief, and of all that that unbelief covered in his conduct, he begins with amazement to ask, “How can I have lived fifteen, twenty, thirty, or forty years, treading under foot the precious blood of the Son of God? How can I have disregarded the gospel? How” —he will not say — “foolish was I;” but earnestly and deeply will he exclaim, “How sinful and guilty was I!” The moment that the Spirit has thus convinced him who is the subject of his action, or of his influence, of unbelief, that unbelief will be fled from, shrunk from, detested, hated, prayed against, protested against; and, by the aid of that Holy Spirit, the shadow of scepticism will disappear before the light of Christian truth, and the unbelief that sees in Christ no beauty, that we should desire him changed into that cordial, and earnest, and loving faith, which finds its best expression in saying, “He is the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely.”

After, therefore, the Holy Spirit has convinced and convicted the heart and conscience and soul of this unbelief—this mother sin, he proceeds to convict the same heart of righteousness. Now, what is meant by this, “of righteousness?” It is a righteousness provided for us. He opens the blind eyes to see a righteousness laid up for me which I have not of myself, and which none can lend me. And while passion claims indulgence—while conscience calls from its throne, “Sin not!” Jesus speaks to me, and tells me, “I am the propitiation for your sins; I am the Lord your Righteousness; my righteousness is with all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference.” If the Spirit convicted us of sin, and left us there, then we should be in the very vestibule of hell: but when the Spirit makes the conviction of sin the precursor only to conviction of righteousness, I am lifted to the very vestibule of heaven. And here is the difference. When a man convicts you of a sin, he leaves you there; and perhaps he feels a triumph in depressing, humbling, and, it may be, degrading you. But the Holy Spirit, even when he convicts of sin, never lays aside the character of the Comforter; and therefore his conviction of your heart of sin, is only the precursor to his conviction of your heart of righteousness laid up for you. He humbles that he may exalt; he depresses that he may lift up; he makes you ashamed of yourself that you may glory in Christ, your Righteousness. When he has convinced a man of sin, he feels his sins so real, his ruin so true, his whole state, when tested by God’s law, so utterly depraved, that he feels that all the penalties of everlasting misery do not exceed what sin deserves. And, on the other hand, when he

convicts you of righteousness laid up for you, arrayed in which you can be justified in the sight of God, you feel instantly that an eternal weight of glory will not exhaust or outweigh what Christ has deserved for you, and what you have in Christ. The Holy Spirit, showing you your sins, makes you feel hell is not too terrible for the issue of sin; and when he shows you the righteousness that covers it, he convinces you that heaven is not too magnificent a reward for him who has fled from that sin to the Saviour—from his ruin to the great Redeemer—from guilt that bows him in the dust, to a righteousness that lifts him to the very sky.

It is thus that the Holy Spirit convinces us of righteousness—not of a righteous man, as if Christ were only that; but of Christ our righteousness. If the Spirit convinced us only of a righteous man, and Christ that man, as an example, or standard, instead of being comforted we should exclaim, like Peter, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” But what the Spirit convinces us of after he has convicted us of sin, is that Christ is not a righteous man, a standard, an example we are to imitate only; but that he is righteous for us, that he suffered for us, that he died for us, that he is our righteousness, and that by him we may be justified from all things from which we cannot be justified by the law of Moses. Hence, our justifying righteousness, which the Holy Spirit discloses to the heart of the believer, is not an imitation of Christ’s, but really Christ’s; is not something that we do in the direction in which he lived, but something that we receive from him who is our righteousness—not a resemblance to him, but the reality of what he is; so that clothed in it I am justified; so that imputed to me

it entitles me to everlasting heaven; and I am as satisfied that I am safe by the righteousness of Christ upon me, as I was previously that I was ruined by my own sin in my heart and conscience within me.

Lastly, this Holy Spirit convinces those who are the subjects of his presence, "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Who is the prince of this world? Satan, the usurper. And he is judged in what respect? Constantly a judgment upon Satan and sin is going on. We say, frequently we say, and infidel philosophy tries to prove, that disease, and decay, and death, are the natural and normal things in our world. They say it is natural to die, to be ill, to have aches and ills. That is what the world says, what philosophy says, but in truth is not natural. And these very things, if not sanctified by being made new in the case of a believer, are a continuous judgment of God upon sin. All the world's sufferings are just fulfillments of this. The "prince of this world is judged." Wherever you can see sin leading to sorrow, and often leading to suffering, there you see judgments; and if the Holy Spirit implants the conviction in your hearts you feel it. The tints of autumn, frost, winter, snow, plague, pestilence, famine, battle, murder, death, these are the footprints of judgment, prefigurative of a judgment day. There is enough in this world to show that God is in it; and there is enough evil in it to show that it has come under some great catastrophe; and there is enough of judgment visited upon sin to prove that there is a judgment-seat. Now the Holy Spirit convinces us of judgment; in other words, shows us, and not only as man does, but by imprinting it upon the inmost heart, that sin leads to misery, that judgment

is going on, and continues upon us, preparatory to that great day, when the Judge of all the earth shall do right.

And when he says, "The prince of this world is judged," it is in this way that he is judged. Wherever you see, on the other hand, not sin ending in misery, but Christianity triumphing over want, and woe, misery, proscription, opposition, chains and death, there you see Satan like lightning fall from heaven. When Satan raised the persecutors of the early Christians, and cast those Christians into prison, and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, we saw the prince of this world judged, falling like lightning from heaven; his efforts to crush the Gospel only exhibiting, by the joyous patience of the sufferers, its power, its excellence, and its glory. When Paul and Silas, cast into the prison at Philippi, sang hymns of praise in the night-time, there you had Satan stirring up the persecutor to thrust them there, and make their feet fast in the stocks; but in the songs they sung, and the joy they felt, and the hopes they never let go even in the darkness of the prison and the silence of a dungeon, we heard praise triumphing over suffering, the joy of the Gospel abounding more where its trials abounded, and the prince of this world disappointed, beaten back,—in the language of the text, "the prince of this world judged." And so, wherever we feel our light affliction for a moment working out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory, there you have the ills that sin has introduced, that Satan wields, working out the results that God intends—judgment passing as a process on Satan, and glory evolving to God. And do we

not see in this world a striking proof of a process of judgment or condemnation on Satan going on, in the fact that ambition, lust, pride, dishonesty, are visited with punishment ; fail to answer their purpose, or recoil upon them that accept them ? Is it not fact that ambition, pride, dishonesty, evil appetite, do not succeed, but avenge themselves upon them that indulge in them ? And, on the other hand, do we not find that right in the long run is might, that humility is elevation, that holiness is strength, that to gain, it is always the best way to give, and to minister to others is the way to be ministered unto ourselves ? What are these but indirect lights of the ultimate ascendancy of the true, the good, the just, the holy, —incipient proofs that the prince of this world is judge,—light evolving from darkness, beauty emerging from wreck, and foretokens scattered over the experience of man ;—all telling us by premonitions, by experiments on a small scale, that ambition, and pride, and depravity, and sin of every sort, shall ultimately be laid low, or Satan bound and shut up, sin put away, and all its tumults arrested ; and that holiness, and truth, and love, and peace, shall spread over all the earth.

VI.

The Inner Baptism.

ALL that man does, he does as an instrument—God acts as a Sovereign. Delegation is man's—original and underived sovereignty is the attribute of Deity. It is therefore justly said:—“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”—Luke iii. 16.

In the one case we see the baptism of John—the servant; and in the other the baptism of Jesus—the great Master. John says, “I indeed baptize you with water”—mine is an outward ministry, conferring an outward ecclesiastical sign; but Jesus baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. His is the inner power, imparting to the heart the inward and the spiritual grace. The first is a declaration of the function of the servant—the visible minister, baptizing with visible water; the second is the announcement of the supreme prerogative of the blessed Master, who baptizeth as neither priest, nor prelate, nor presbyter can,—with the Holy Ghost himself. What shows that there is a material distinction between the baptism of the minister and the bap-

tism of Jesus is, the remarkable fact, that Jesus never Himself baptized with water; and yet, even when an apostle baptized with water, he did not seem to attach to it an inward, efficacious, regenerative power. For if he did, would the Apostle Paul have said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you"? If baptism be in every case regeneration of heart, would an apostle thank God that he did not make men Christians? It ought to be ground for sorrow and regret, not for thanksgiving and rejoicing. But baptism with water is not essentially connected with renewal and regeneration of heart; and the fact that our blessed Lord gave the minister the outward function—baptizing with water, and reserved to himself the inner prerogative—baptizing with the Holy Ghost, shows that He alone has this lofty prerogative, and still keeps it specially and exclusively for himself.

This prophecy, given by John the Baptist, was fulfilled, and we see the visible proof of its fulfilment in the fact that flames of fire rested on every apostle's head: evidence to the people, and no more, that the Holy Ghost had come, and that, therefore, the prophecy was fulfilled. Then the miraculous powers which followed the descent of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost, were not the only fruits of the accession of the Holy Spirit, but proofs to the world, and to the church, that the same Spirit whose descent the flame denoted, also continued to dwell in the hearts of those apostles who originally received him. But underneath the baptism with fire, that was visible on the head, was the baptism with miraculous power, transparent in their acts, producing that inner regeneration and revolution of nature which made the Peter after the day of Pen-

tecost as unlike the Peter that was before that day, as one man can be unlike another. It needs but a comparison between what Peter, and John, and the other apostles were previous to the day of Pentecost, and what they became immediately subsequent to that event, to see that the baptism with the Holy Ghost was not simply the power to speak new tongues, or to do wonderful works, but an inward transformation and renewal of heart and nature, that made them new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The promise of John is often referred to in other parts of the Word of God. It began at Pentecost, and will again appear in richer effusion before the Lord comes. It is first of all, or rather most minutely referred to by Joel: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." That prophecy of Joel, which Peter quotes, was partially fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, but has not yet been exhausted. The great and terrible day of the Lord is when the heavens and the earth shall be exchanged for a new heaven and a new earth, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. And before that day comes, that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, there will be an extraordinary pouring

out of God's Holy Spirit on all flesh, preparatory to the advent of Him whose right and promise it is to reign from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. That this promise was meant by Peter, and described by him to have been partly fulfilled at Pentecost, and that it is associated with John's prophecy also, is evident from what we read in Acts i. 5:—"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Then, in the 2d chapter:—"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Then Peter says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"—this is the beginning of it, but not the exhaustion; the commencement, but not the close—"It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

✕ This baptism with the Holy Spirit of God is the true and essential baptism. Satan will be quite satisfied that we should quarrel about the meaning of baptism with water, if we only fail to see the absolute necessity of baptism with the Holy Ghost. ✕ It is most important that we should be upon our guard against dwelling too long upon this or any other outward rite. When men begin to quarrel about ecclesiastical questions, they soon come to lift the Church out of its true place: when they discuss long upon sacraments, they end in

displacing the sacraments from their just place. The Lord's Supper was disputed about, till it ended in transubstantiation; baptism with water has been discussed till it has been identified with regeneration by the Holy Spirit. What transubstantiation is to the Lord's Supper, baptismal regeneration is to baptism. Transubstantiation is making a sign to be actual Christ; baptismal regeneration is making a sign to be actually the Holy Spirit of God. How beautiful is the distinction drawn in the words and in the prophecy of John: "I, the minister, baptize you with water,"—that is all that I can do—"but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

What is the import of this baptism with the Holy Ghost, thus spoken of by John, and predicted by the prophet, and partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles? It is doing to the inward man what baptism with water does to the outer; it is the cleansing of the thoughts of the heart; it is tuning the discordant strings of the soul. It is implanting, in the place of the old Adam, a new man and a new creature; it is not changing the old nature into the new; but it is planting in the midst of the old nature a powerful, a conquering, and a dominant new. In the highest Christian upon earth, there is still the old Adam, or the old nature, with its offspring of trials and sorrows and temptations; but in the least Christian upon earth there is the new creature, gaining power every day, subduing the old man, triumphing in the strength of the Holy Spirit, and indicating a

baptism which man can neither give, nor mar, nor take away—baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Let us notice what would be some of the effects of the Pentecostal baptism, were it now—as we hope it soon will—to descend upon the whole Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be first, the sprinkling of the shower before the descending flood; there will be first, local indications of the pouring out of that Holy and Blessed Spirit, before the great Pentecostal effusion comes. One cannot look around on the Christian Church at the present moment without admitting, whilst we grieve for the superstition that prevails, whilst we wonder that there should be any in a true Church holding deadly and antisciptural dogmas, that never in the history of our country was there more real religion than at the present moment. Never did religion prevail so much among the higher classes, or spread so wide among the humbler. May not this be the first sprinkling before the glorious shower? May not this be the herald of the Pentecostal day? May it not be the first faint dawn that indicates the approach of a glorious and an everlasting noon? But what would be some of the effects of the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Look at Peter previous to the day of Pentecost, and after that day: the change is complete; the transformation is inconceivable.

Let me, however, guard against misapprehension of what would be the effect of the Holy Spirit of God being poured out on a congregation. So much has been associated with “revivals,” as they are called, especially across the Atlantic,—offensive, unscriptural, and coarse, that when one speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit of God, many excellent Christians

misapprehend and misconstrue it. Were it to please God to pour out his Holy Spirit upon all flesh, the effect would not be mere excitement. I do not know that excitement is always evidence of strength; fever is excitement, but it is not health; excitement is not always power. At the same time, I do not think that the risk of the age lies in the direction of getting too much excited about religion. One may see every day far more excitement in trade, in politics, about the loss or gain of twenty shillings, than about the safety of the soul, the interests of eternity, the destinies of man, the glory of God, the salvation of sinners. Many a one is under far more excitement about an appearance in some gay assembly, than about the appearance of the soul at the judgment-seat of Christ. It is scarcely fair to complain of excitement connected with religion, when we see so much in the gay world, in political circles, in the commercial world.

This pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon all flesh, would not lead to anything like eccentricity. Some people seem to have the idea that one cannot be religious, and yet be natural; that unless you speak in a peculiar tone, approaching to a whine, put on a grave face, and seem to men to fast; unless you conform to certain extrinsic and peculiar habits, you cannot be under the power of real religion. It seems to me that true piety will never be discourteous, as it will never be disloyal; it will neither give up the urbanities of life, nor refuse to give honour to whom honour, and duty to whom duty are due. Eccentricities are excrescences on true religion, not its beautiful and its fragrant growth; Pharisaic pretences, not the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus. Wherever there is pretence, whether

it be in the pulpit or in the pew, wherever anything is put on for show, or for effect, all power dries up, because all reality is gone. When you come under the influence of true religion, you will be the same man, you will speak in the same way, you will be as friendly on the streets, to friend and foe—to him that differs from you, and to him that agrees with you,—as you ever were before; but you will be, in all that you think, and do, and say, sustained by a power, sanctified by a consecration, and moulded after a standard, which will show that you are, while not eccentric, a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Were God to pour out his Holy Spirit upon all mankind, there would be nothing of fanaticism. We have heard, associated with what has been said to be—I cannot judge whether it is real or not—the revival of real religion, extreme extravagance and fanaticism. Now, it does seem to me that Christian enthusiasm is as different from fanaticism, as the beautiful light that shines on the perfect day is from the flash of lightning that lays low the lofty palace and the lowly hamlet. Enthusiasm is apostolical; fanaticism is Mahometan. Fanaticism is like the rocket that ascends into the sky, and blazes, and bursts, and leaves the darkness blacker than before: but enthusiasm—Christian enthusiasm—is like the warmth that we read of in southern lands, which is to be traced, not by intolerant and explosive fires, but by the genial soil, and the abundant harvests that grow up, witnessing to the goodness of God, and the fertility of the soil below. The descent of the Holy Spirit of God would be accompanied with no fanaticism. I do not believe that, if all England were intensely and enthusiastically Christian, the Royal Ex-

change would be pulled down, or that the House of Lords would be upset. I do not believe, if real religion were in every man's heart, and true piety like the atmosphere of every man's life, that one railway station would be shut up, or one shop closed. The commerce, the statesmanship, the literature, the science, and the arts of the world, would go on as they did before, only inspired by a nobler spirit, and elevated to a more glorious and heavenly platform.

Were this Spirit poured down upon earth in every home, there would be the morning incense of praise, and the evening sacrifice of prayer, not the least beautiful sight below. The family on earth would approach almost the family in heaven: and the roof-tree of the humblest shieling would have the magnificence of the homes of the blest, where it is consecrated by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving.

Our schools would be nurseries of true religion; not less on that account the nurseries of secular education, as it is commonly called, but more than ever the nurseries of true, scriptural, and Christian religion. And were this Holy Spirit poured out, then talent would be no more desecrated. That gigantic engine of good or evil, the newspaper press, would be sanctified; every element, every means of power, would become an element and a means of good. Then men would be temperate without the necessity of being teetotallers; chaste without going into convents; true without oaths; and a self-government that would supersede the outward government of the land would prevail.

In individual cases, no less beautiful results would follow. The moment that a man feels the Spirit of God in his heart, he begins to be anxious about his

soul. Few are without some thoughts about their soul; all know that that outward shell, beautifully and fearfully made, must crumble into dust, and that out of it must emerge the soul, like the sword from its scabbard, or the lightning from the cloud, and appear naked before God in judgment. All know this. Few can escape this solemn presentiment—this deep and sacred truth. But the moment the thought breaks in upon the soul, too many raise up a thousand barriers to repel it, or divert the heart to other inquiries and expectations. But when the Holy Spirit is given, men will ask the question with an emphasis with which they never asked it before—"What must I do to be saved?" and they will wait upon the preaching of God's Word, and draw near to God's throne of grace, and read his holy word with an earnestness with which they never read it before. When men begin to be guided by the Holy Spirit of God to seek and find the way to heaven, it is wonderful how all the paltry and superficial questions on mere forms will fall away, as the one thing needful rises in prominence and greatness. They will not care very much whether they worship with a Liturgy or without one; whether they be under an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian government; whether they have an instrument for praise, or be without one. They will look upon these things as tiny lights, and still desire to see the great and glorious sun that is above them—as the mere jots and tittles that perish, not the essential and vital things. When a person is very hungry, he will not trouble himself much whether the bread that is presented to him be on a wooden trencher or in a silver basket. Indeed, the instant that a man begins to examine the basket, and to discuss its merits, we

may be sure that he is not very hungry. So, when one is very anxious about his soul, he will not entertain many discussions about the mere outward forms and ceremonies; he will have no inclination to enter into disputes upon such details.

When this Holy Spirit is poured out upon an individual there will be in the heart joy, and peace, and righteousness in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit not only leads to Christ, but he leaves in the heart in which he condescends to dwell, all the holy impressions of his presence. The kingdom of God is first righteousness, then it is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is as much the Comforter as he is the Sanctifier; he is as much the Author of joy as he is the Author of holiness; and therefore one of the direct results of Christianity is, to give men inward peace—to make men happy. Yet the very opposite conclusion is that which thousands entertain. If, instead of asking men their opinions, you watch men's movements, you will see that they think religion, and prayer, and the thought of God, and the Bible, very good things for a funeral, very suitable at a sick bed, most proper when we are in deep distress, but scarcely, if at all, suitable topics for joyous hours. Yet, Christianity in its deepest action, is as appropriate at bridals as it is at burials; it is as beautiful in life's sunny hours, as it is precious in its sad and shadowy ones; it is as appropriate when the father gazes on his new-born babe, as when a venerable parent is taken away, and those he has left behind him weep over the sad and irreparable catastrophe. As if to teach this, the very first miracle that Jesus wrought was at a marriage, in Cana of Galilee. How suggestive is this fact! He who came to tread life's

thorny path, paused for a minute to gather a beautiful flower as he entered it ! He that was going through a long and an arduous travail, bearing the cross,—a Man of sorrows—yet paused for a moment to rejoice with them that did rejoice, before he went forth to weep with them that wept ! How beautiful, that this blessed Gospel dawned in the form of a nuptial benediction ! It began with joy—it ends in glory and joy also. And instead of being a religion wholly sepulchral, it is wholly joyous. If we are not happy under its power, it is not because it has lost its influence, but because we have mistaken, misapprehended, or missed its meaning. The very first effect of the good news is to make a man happy and joyous—not only when all is prosperous, for it is very easy to be happy in the sunshine—but when all is shaded and sad. At those times that happen to all, when life's loveliest things fade, this religion takes their place. “Though the fig-tree shall not blossom ; though there shall be no fruit on the vine ; though the labour of the olive shall fail ; though there shall be no herd in the stall ; yet,” in the event of this utter destitution, says the prophet, “I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” And so it is with the Christian ; still in circumstances of the deepest distress, he has an inward and a compensatory joy, which makes him, like the apostles, take joyfully the spoiling of his goods.

“As some tall cliff that rears its awful form
Above the rest, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

So it is with the Christian. Though trouble, affliction, distress, make him weep,—for that is human ; yet

this blessed Gospel, this possession of the Holy Spirit within him, makes him rejoice,—for this is divine. A Christian is not a Stoic—a man who does not feel! The bravest hearts are generally the most sensitive. It has often been found, that a hero's valour on the field of battle has been combined with a woman's tenderness in sympathy with sorrow and suffering. Not stoicism, but human nature, in all its sensibilities, constitutes a man inspired and ennobled by the possession of the Holy Spirit of God.

Were the Holy Spirit poured out into all hearts, there would be a greater amount of light in every section and department of the Church of Christ. There is much darkness in the most enlightened mind, there are heavy clouds resting upon the Church; but if this Holy Spirit, who is the Teacher, shall take of the things of Christ—who is the Light—and show them to us, it will reveal to us the darkness that lies upon the world like a pall, and show how little impression the light of divine truth has yet produced upon the masses of mankind. We should see multitudes of mankind perishing for lack of knowledge; we should hear the tramp of innumerable feet that beat hard the broad way that leads to everlasting death; we should hear, borne upon every breeze across the Pacific and the broad Atlantic, the cry of innumerable millions; and the world itself, in which we now walk so complacently, would present a very different aspect, if we had only that blessed light to show us the gigantic difference between the light of the glorious Gospel, and the darkness that may be felt.

That this would be the effect is evident from the consideration — as we may see — of the present depravity

and degeneracy of mankind. Mahometanism still holds the fairest portion of the earth; the Crescent still floats supreme where the Cross once was, and where the Cross will be again. And if we had light from on high to see this as it is, we should go and try, by scriptural and spiritual means, to put an end to it, as we should be able. It is impossible that a man who has light should look upon darkness without pity; it is impossible that he who has found the way to heaven should look with indifference upon those that have lost it. The uneducated eye does not see darkness that exists; it is in the aphelion of the Sun of Righteousness; but a Christian's eye will see the whole earth to be in darkness; and we should not rest until we have done something consistent with our belief, to enlighten them that be in darkness, and carry the light of the glorious Gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth. I believe that that would be the very first effect of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Light preceded the blossoming earth, and the animated tribes in the ocean, and the cattle on a thousand hills; and light will still, in the spiritual world, precede the greatest triumphs of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next effect of the Holy Ghost being poured out upon us, would be greater and intenser spiritual life. Every Christian, if really such, has life; but then, in many a Christian, life is very feeble; and the pulse at the wrist indicates that the heart in the background is very faint indeed. And when we think of the life of the Apostles—the life of the Reformers of the sixteenth century—the life exhibited by some of the most illustrious Christians of modern times—we must say that the temperature of ours is extremely low, that

there is needed, in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only brighter light, but greater warmth, intenser life; and where there is that individual, spiritual life, there is the best proof of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And nothing else will generate that life. No outward ecclesiastical baptisms will ever give life to the Christian heart. No eloquence in the pulpit can do it; no arrangements of Churches can do it. I do not believe that the duty of the age is Church mending—the duty of the age is prayer for the Holy Ghost. Were the Holy Spirit given to its ministers, the worst Church in Christendom would be the ambassadress of Heaven, the benefactress of the earth. And I believe, on the other hand, that if the Spirit be not given to the most orthodox Church in Christendom, that all the excellence of its machinery, all the power and prestige of its social position, will be worth nothing. Satan will rejoice to see you Church menders, if he can only never see you on your knees, praying for the Holy Ghost. Satan will rejoice to see you fierce ecclesiastics, zealous Churchmen, desperate Dissenters, if he can only succeed in keeping you from being baptized with the inner baptism of the Holy Ghost. What we want is not new machinery, but divine life to actuate the old—no other Churches, but divine light to permeate the old ones. I am myself very indifferent about what the Church may be, but I do feel most deeply that the Church should be baptized with the Holy Ghost, as with fire. Let us care less about forms, and ceremonies, and sect, and system, and pray more, each personally, at the throne of grace, for the Holy Spirit of God. I believe that all Churches are soon to be ground to powder; our best and our worst, our

Established and Dissenting, are all soon to be broken to pieces ; but out of the ruins will emerge a Church, not made by ecclesiastics, not man-made, or minister-made, or General-Assembly-made, or bishop-made, but Spirit-made, a Church divinely instituted, divinely formed ; bright as the sun, fair as the moon, presented unto Jesus a glorious Church, without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Our existing Churches are all provisional, the Church that is to be will be perfect ; and when that which is perfect is come, then that which is provisional will be done away.

The next effect will be greater holiness in each individual. Holiness is a grace so majestic and impressive, that the world stands in awe of it ; and holiness has for its standard a holy law ; for its Author the living God ; for its inspiration the Holy Ghost ; for its fruits whatsoever things are pure, and just, and honest, and lovely, and of good report. And if we were made what the Holy Spirit can make us, what no baptism with water ever made one, what baptism by an ecclesiastic never can make any, truly regenerate, more holy, by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on our hearts, we should be less exacting in relation to others, less aspiring in relation to ourselves, less tied, though no less loving, to those with whom we are connected ; we should expend far less in ecclesiastical decorations, and far more in building up living stones into a glorious temple, whose builder and whose maker is God. We should have less rivalry with sect, more rivalry who shall do the greatest good. We should prefer to be pure in heart rather than to be beautiful without ; to be rich in grace rather than rich in this world ; to have new hearts, new sympathies, new desires, to be a holy

nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. And the result of all this light, and life, and holiness, would be more power for good in the whole Christian Church. I do not mean political power; that power does not, I think, materially aid the Church of Christ; nor ecclesiastical domination;—ambitious ecclesiastics, thirsting for ecclesiastical power, have done more to keep men from the Church of Christ than anything else that I know;—nor mere intellectual power—there may be great power in the preacher, and there will only be great admiration, but no sanctifying effect on the people; nor do I mean great numbers,—great numbers are not the test of great prosperity in a church; but power to speak faithfully, to live purely, to do the greatest good, and good to an extent to which it had never been done before, in benefitting and blessing all mankind.

Such would be the effect of baptism with the Holy Ghost, whenever God shall vouchsafe to give it.

This Holy Spirit, whose baptism we thus need, cannot be given or granted by any man upon earth. But yet he has been ever given in connexion with the preaching of the Gospel. We do not find the Holy Spirit poured out upon Mahometans or Pagans; but when the missionaries go to preach the glad tidings of great joy, this result does take place. It shows us, that while God works without means, and above means, and against means, the ordinary way is, that he honours the means, and gives his blessing where Paul plants, and Apollos faithfully sows.

This blessing is given in answer to prayer.—“If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall my Father give the Spirit

unto them that ask him." And God tells the people of Israel in Ezekiel, "For all these things will I be entreated, saith the Lord of Hosts." Now what is the reason that any man has not a new heart? It is that he will not ask. What is the reason that I am not a temple of the Holy Ghost? I do not ask. We have lost faith in God's invitation to ask—we have no confidence in his promise that he will give; and therefore we do not ask. But if we will take God at his word, pray to him, and beseech him to give what we need, and what man cannot give, the baptism of the Holy Ghost; no one who thus earnestly asks will ever retire disappointed. Instead, therefore, of discussing whether baptism with water can regenerate the human heart, a subject that ought to need no discussion, it is so transparent; we ought rather to pray that God will give us that true and inner baptism which man can neither give nor take away, the baptism of the Holy Ghost; thus we should have light, and life, and holiness, and power, and bear visibly before the world the impress of a divine and a heavenly connexion.

If this be the latter era of the world in which we live, how solemn and important is our position; how great, how instant, how urgent is our responsibility! We ought to pray not only for ourselves, but for the whole church, that God will give it that baptism—that spiritual baptism, that is the best preparation for his advent, and the truest evidence that his advent is at hand. What is all the spurious excitement that prevails in every section of the church, but the result of the want of this unction of the Spirit of God? We look in one direction, and men are so conscious that something is wanting, that they are pulling up the old

stakes, and planting new ones. We turn in another direction, and men are attempting to supply the want of it by a rood screen, or a fine altar, or oriel windows, or pictures of the Trinity; there is a universal desire among mankind for something more than they have; a universal feeling that there is some great want in the Church of Christ; and mistaking what is the real want, and who can alone supply it, they are running to cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; and, instead of removing the thirst, they are only making it intenser. But still, all this movement that prevails in the visible church, is evidence that men are conscious that there is something wanting, there is a felt sensation of some great deficiency. That deficiency is the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and that which we should instantly set about is to pray that the Holy Spirit would descend upon the Church, and we shall then not seek new churches, or gaudy churches, but we shall remain where God, in his providence, has placed us, feeling that religion, true religion, is not connexion with a church, but connexion with Christ; not ecclesiasticism, but true piety; not change of our position in the world, but change of heart and of nature. And if that baptism be ours, we have that which is the best, the only preparation for the kingdom of heaven.

Let each, then, ask himself, Am I baptized with the Holy Ghost? Baptism with water is duty; but are you baptized with the Holy Ghost? Are your hearts changed? He alone can make a Christian, not mere baptism; he alone can make a minister, not imposition of hands; he alone can make a saint, not the canon-

zation of the Pope ; he alone can reach the heart, not the eloquence of the most gifted of mankind.

Are we thus changed ? There is one prayer that a child can use, but yet the grandest that a saint can employ : " O Lord, give me the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Man has baptized me with water ; oh, exalted Redeemer, do thou baptize me with the Holy Ghost ; that mine may be an everlasting blessing, and thine glory, and honour, and thanksgiving."

VII.

The Divine Remembrancer.

NOT the least interesting and instructive view of the work of the Holy Spirit is that of our Remembrancer, as he brings to our remembrance the words and truths of Jesus. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John xvi. 26.

How precious is this promise of our blessed Lord! One shall come and be as much present with each individual Christian as with the whole company of believers, and do what earthly ministers cannot—teach the heart all things, and bring—what no memory of its own unaided powers is able to do—all things to remembrance whatsoever Christ has said to us. We read so often of the Holy Spirit, in the Gospel of St. John especially, that we are sometimes inclined to ask, Was the Spirit given under the Old Testament economy; and is there any allusion to him and his work in that volume? I answer, The Spirit was in the Church from the beginning. David could not have had a clean heart, except by the almighty power of the Holy

Spirit; but under the New Testament economy, as we have seen, he was given in larger abundance, as the promises of the Old distinctly and emphatically say. That the Spirit existed under the Old Testament dispensation is plain from many allusions to him. I might show this by noticing the fact, that wherever God is described in the Old Testament Scriptures, he is described almost always in the plural number; not proving, thereby, that the Holy Spirit is God, but decidedly and unmistakeably that there is what we call in theological language, a plurality of Persons in the essential and blessed Godhead. I know many persons at once shrink from the idea, as if plurality of Persons in the Godhead meant more Gods than one. But they forget an important distinction. We do not believe in *Tritheism*—three Gods; but in the Trinity, or Trinity—three in one. You say, How can we conceive three in one? Every reader of this page is a compound being, consisting of soul, spirit, and body; or, more comprehensively, of soul and body. Now there cannot be two more distinct things in the world than soul and body; and yet you do not hesitate to speak of both as one; and therefore we have in every living man three in one, or at least two in one, according as you divide the soul and distinguish it from the body. So may we conceive there can be in Deity three Persons, each God, and yet but one God. Of course I do not pretend to explain it; I cannot comprehend it; but if we are to make our ability to comprehend a thing the criterion of its truth, or the reverse, we shall be obliged to deny many things, and very common things; for we comprehend far smaller and far fewer things than sometimes, in our pride, we satisfy our-

selves. Such allusions as the following indicate more than one Person in the Godhead: Gen. i. 26,—“And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image.” Gen. iii. 22,—“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.” Mal. i. 6,—“If I be a master (literally, masters), where is my fear? saith the Lord.” And again, Eccl. xii. 1,—“Remember now thy Creator,” as in our version; but in the original, “Remember thy *Creators*.” And so many other passages that might be quoted, indicate plurality in the Godhead, whatever be the meaning of that plurality. But we have distinct allusions to the Holy Spirit as God. Gen. i. 2.—“The Spirit moved upon the face of the waters;” a fact distinctly expressive of the Holy Spirit. It is, literally translated, “And the Spirit kept fluttering after the manner of a dove upon the waters.” Accordingly, you read in the Gospels, “The Spirit descended like a dove.” The passage in Gen. i. 2, and the record of the Spirit’s descent upon Jesus, so correspond to each other, that both must refer to the one Holy Spirit. Again, in Gen. vi. 3,—“My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Again, in Psalm civ. 30,—“Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created.” Sam. xxiii. 2,—“The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.” All these are plainly allusions to the third Person in the holy and blessed Trinity. But it has been supposed by Bishop Heber, a very competent and accomplished critic, that in Daniel there are very pointed allusions to the Holy Spirit of God. For instance, in Daniel x. 16, Bishop Heber thinks that the Holy Spirit is not only alluded to, but positively mentioned: “And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my

mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." Now the reason why the Bishop seems to think that this relates to the Holy Spirit is, that Michael is a designation of our blessed Lord, Michael the archangel elsewhere, called here, "your prince." "I send my messenger," is, in the original, "I send my angel before thee." So again, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel" — the chief Messenger, the Shiloh, the Sent One, the Messiah. And he supposes here that Michael, spoken of in Daniel, is always the representative of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And the Jews, very remarkably, in their comments upon Daniel, speak of Michael as the great High Priest in the heavens, by whom the tribes of Israel are presented to God; as if they were giving, long before, the true picture in the Apocalypse,

where Jesus is spoken of as a chief angel, who presented the prayers of saints in the golden censer before the throne,—a dim and imperfect sketch of the great original that should be revealed in the fulness of the times. Then Bishop Heber thinks that Gabriel, spoken of so often in Daniel, is really the Holy Spirit of God—that Michael was our blessed Lord, and that Gabriel was the Holy Spirit of God. The allusions to him are in Dan. viii. 16: “And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision”—that is, some Divine Being called to one here called Gabriel, who is commissioned to make him understand the vision; or, in the language of our Lord, to “teach him all things whatsoever I have said unto you.” Again, Daniel ix. 21: “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel”—“man” ought to be omitted—“whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation”—that is, sacrifice. “And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding,” which is the great function or office of the Holy Spirit of God. And in Daniel viii. 13, Bishop Heber thinks he is alluded to: “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice?” Now, in the original, it is, “And one Holy One said unto that other Holy One.” It is not the word “saint,” as applied to the Christian believer, as in the New Testament; but one Holy One speaking to another Holy One.

As if to confirm Bishop Heber’s interpretation, we

find in the beginning of Luke, that there appears to Mary—in the 26th verse of the 1st chapter of Luke—“the angel Gabriel,” or “the messenger Gabriel, sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” And then Mary said, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” “Gabriel” is, literally translated, “The power of the Highest;” Gabriel, the strength of God, or the power of the strong God, or the power of the Highest. And therefore here there may be an allusion to the picture of Daniel describing the Holy Spirit of God. This, however, I leave for consideration; I cannot see that Gabriel and Michael are created angels. In the Book of Daniel they appear, on the contrary, as Divine Beings; and they may be as Bishop Heber concludes, and what divines call anthropomorphic appearances of these blessed Persons in the Trinity, consulting, and working, and acting in the salvation of the human family.

I now turn to the special function of the Holy Spirit

stated here ; which is, first, to teach us all things ; and secondly, to bring all things to our remembrance. The first question is, What are the “all things?” It is evidently the same “all things” as that mentioned by John. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know *all things*,” It is plain it must be all things spiritual or Christian, relating to God and to the soul. The apostles were not commissioned to reveal scientific facts ; and there is no promise that a Christian shall understand by Divine teaching scientific things, one whit better than the scholar who studies them, and does not believe in Christianity at all. And therefore, in the Bible we understand by the “all things,” all those spiritual and eternal truths that bear upon and contribute to the salvation of mankind. We must not therefore expect to find in the Bible scientific truths taught as such ; though there may be many spiritual truths that touch the margin of scientific phenomena. The Spirit will not teach a Christian science. This is not the promise. The “all things” are clearly—what common sense leads us to understand—spiritual things. We do not expect in a book upon geology discourses about astronomy ; and we do not consult a treatise on mineralogy to find the truths of astronomy ; we expect in a book that which on its title-page it professes to teach. So in the Christian Scriptures we look for, not astronomy, not geology, but religion. And, therefore, the promise of the Holy Spirit is to teach us the all things that relate to the soul and to everlasting life.

The “all things,” in the second place, must denote all things revealed—all things positively revealed. There are many great things that we must feel a deep interest in knowing, which God has not been pleased

to make known. God has revealed in the Bible everything to sanctify the soul, but nothing to gratify a morbid curiosity. We may not therefore expect that the Holy Spirit will teach us to answer many curious questions that men have asked, and will ask; but that he will teach us savingly and profitably those precious truths which God has revealed. For instance, it has been asked, How long did Adam stand in Paradise before he fell? This is not revealed; there is no reason to hope that the Spirit will teach it. It has been asked, If Eve only had sinned, and Adam had remained innocent, would humanity have fallen? That question may be asked; there is no answer in the Bible; we have no warrant to pray that the Holy Spirit would teach it. It has been asked, How long will the day of judgment last? This is not revealed; but I think there is enough revealed to show that it will not occupy twenty-four hours only, but a long time, in contrast to the day of grace that now is. The Bible, however, is silent. We must therefore limit the teaching of the Holy Spirit to the "all things" that are revealed in the Bible.

We must even further still limit in some respect the "all things;" because there are many things that are stated in the Bible which all believers do not know. Everybody must admit that there are in the Bible things essential and things called non-essential; or truths so vital, that if we do not know them we miss the way to heaven; and other truths valuable, but so subsidiary, that many Christians who do not know them, or misunderstand them, yet do not lose their souls or materially suffer thereby. In the human economy the eye is most useful, and the hand most

helpful ; but we may lose both hand and eye, and yet live in good health. But if we lose the heart, or the lungs, or the brain, then life — physical life—is put an end to. We see therefore in our physical economy, parts that are essential, and parts that are subsidiary. So in a bridge ; we may take down the railings, and yet the bridge will stand ; but if we take out the key-stone, the bridge must fall. So in the things that are in the Bible : take away some things, and you deprive Christianity of that which is ornamental, beautiful, useful ; but you do not take away that which is its very essence and its substance. We may therefore expect that the Spirit will not teach us, in all circumstances, and everywhere, all things ; for we find good men differ in their interpretation of subsidiary things : but we may expect that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things that are essential to our present safety, and future prospects and happiness.

Having seen this first function of the Holy Spirit as the Teacher of all things, let me notice a no less interesting function of this blessed Comforter—that of the Remembrancer—“ He will bring all things to your remembrance.” It is a very remarkable fact, and one that we do not need to be told, (for we all know it,) that not only has the intellect been weakened and the heart corrupted, but the memory also is crippled and impaired. And not only has the memory lost its power to retain its trust, but it has the tendency to let go the holy, and to keep in it only the impure and the unholy ; than which I know not a stronger evidence of the corruption that has passed upon our nature. The Holy Spirit not only gives us new hearts by sanctifying

them, and better minds by enlightening them—not only makes us more fit to apprehend the truth by teaching us, but also improves our memories, by bringing to our recollection all things, limiting the all things by what I have said—“whatsoever I have said unto you.” One must see—and the first evidence of this may be in some degree restricted, but it is no less an evidence of the fulfilment of this promise—how impossible it is, that Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John, could have written the Gospels that bear their names, unless this very promise had been made actual in their experience.

To put it on the very lowest ground, suppose that I were to select a common tax-gatherer, a fisherman, and a physician, in the nineteenth century, and were to ask this fisherman, tax-gatherer, and physician, to sit down and write out all the sermons that they have heard me preach in the year 1853. Each would attempt it; but you would be surprised how little they would be able to commit to paper, what mistakes they would make, what misapprehensions they would show; and how difficult it would be to write down, not simply the words, but the substantial truths they have all three heard week after week.

Let us take the 5th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew—that magnificent pyramid, that most eloquent thing, the Sermon on the Mount—the beatitudes of Matthew. It would be a greater miracle to suppose a tax-gatherer like Matthew—an illiterate, gross, vulgar-minded man, without education of any sort—to sit down and record that sermon, than to suppose that the Holy Spirit of God taught him, and brought to his remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto him.

He could not have invented it; for there was nothing like it in that age. Our acquaintance with it makes it look simple. Great discoveries, struck out by master minds, seem the plainest things possible, when once they are made. Before Sir Isaac Newton's day the whole economy of the universe was, in our apprehension, in confusion. He saw an apple falling from a tree, and from that he unfolded the great law of gravitation, or all things gravitating to the centre of the globe, and all the orbs gravitating to the sun, their centre. Now that the discovery is made, we can see how very natural it is—nothing more natural; and we wonder, and are amazed, that men did not discover it before: and yet it required the world to wait till a Newton came before that discovery was made. So, in the same manner, when we now read the 5th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the morality is so purely what the tone and temperature of all social life should be, that we feel, nothing is more natural. than the 5th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

But if we need contemporaneous Latin writers—even Seneca, the best of them—or earlier Greek writers, Plato or Xenophon, we shall see how infinitely beneath the Publican of Galilee are the noblest inspirations of heathendom. So much is this the case, that we are constrained to infer, it is as impossible that Matthew the publican could have written the 5th chapter of his Gospel from his own genius, as that he could have soared to the fixed stars, or taken up the ocean in the hollow of his hand. I do not need arguments to prove the inspiration of the Bible; when I know these facts, it is irresistibly proved that Matthew wrote as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit; and that Spirit brought

to his remembrance the things that Christ had said unto him.

But to see how precious, in reference to us, are the truths that the Spirit thus brought to remembrance, let us take any part of the Gospels—the parable of the Prodigal Son, or the beautiful incidents in the Acts, or the conclusive reasoning of the Apostles, or the doctrines applied to the circumstances of their hearers—all indicating the supernatural teaching of the Spirit of God, and see what a vacuum remains. If we will just reflect what the writers of the New Testament were, and then read what they have written, we shall have no difficulty in concluding that they were not the authors, but simply the *amanuenses*—that they were not the originals, but simply the copyists from a grand and living Original. I can tell by reading a book, by the very strain of the writing, whether the writer is a mere copyist, or whether he writes his own original thoughts. First-rate judges, looking at a painting, would say, “That painting is from nature.” First-rate men, reading a poem of taste, would say, “That poem is genius thinking for itself—striking out thoughts for itself.” If we look into the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we shall see they are not copyists, but that they sketched from a magnificent Original, always present and ever before them. They who doubt the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, are the credulous men. It needs a wonderful amount of credulity to be an infidel; needs but common sense to be mentally a Christian; inspired common sense to be savingly a Christian.

But how interesting must this function be to us, upon whom the ends of the world are come; that the

Spirit is still promised to bring to our remembrance all things whatsoever Christ has said! Whatever the Father has promised, whatever Christ has declared, that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us as our Remembrancer. This function is not exhausted, it is still experienced by believers. There are times, for instance, when, if deeply convinced of sin, we are prone to rivet our thoughts upon this single conviction, and so to look at the sin that we lose the Saviour. But what a blessed experience is it when the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance such a text as this: — “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” Or again, suppose we are led, by the plausibilities of error, to look aside from the truth as it is in Jesus; and to look to human things, or ecclesiastical things, and to seek peace, and comfort, and joy from them: how blessed the remembrance of such a text as this, “They have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;” and we flee from the cisterns thus described as broken, and fall back upon the fountain ever full and ever flowing. Or perhaps, in God’s providential government we have found all things running cross. We lose our property, we are bereaved of our children, our hearts are desolate and sad: and we say in agony of heart, and apparently as the finding of our experience, what the Patriarch said so sorrowfully of old, “All these things are against me.” But how delightful when the Remembrancer brings to our recollection the blessed truth, that instead of being against us, they are as much for us as they were for the Patriarch;

and what we know not now we shall know hereafter. Or perhaps we have fears. We say, I fear my God hath forgotten me; all his billows roll over me; all things run cross to me; I seem to be left alone, and friendless, and an orphan in the world." How blessed to feel rush into our fears this bright thought, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? She may forget" — a highly improbable possibility — "she may forget; but I will not forget thee: I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands: I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee:" a text intensely strong in the original: it is, literally translated, "I will not—no, never leave thee; I will not—no, never forsake thee;" the strongest language that can possibly be employed. It is not, therefore, I argue from all this, it is not so much unknown truth that we need to know, or denied truth that we need to be convinced of, for our comfort; but forgotten truth that we need to be reminded of, or brought to our remembrance or our recollection.

And how blessed is this function of the Holy Spirit in another respect! We may be travelling where no Bible is accessible; we may be laid upon a sick bed, where nervous irritability will not allow us to read, or render us almost unable to hear another read for us. But there and then, in the shadows of approaching dissolution, and the solitariness and sadness of a sick bed, is a Remembrancer who can cast light upon thoughts almost effaced from the memory, and make luminous and beautiful, and full of comfort, texts we heard in infancy, which are now the consolations of sickness or age.

How precious, in the next place, is this office of the Holy Spirit in prayer! He reminds us of promises that we can plead, of mercies that we have experienced; so that we can urge, as the Psalmist does in the 4th Psalm, the mercies received yesterday as reasons for new blessings to be received to-day. And how important is this office of the Holy Spirit in days of abounding error! Men come and state things so plausible, that we are almost constrained to say, I must have been "mistaken." It is very wrong, however, to suppose that, when a person gives an argument against the Bible which we cannot answer, we must, therefore, accept that argument; we are to lay it aside and say, "I cannot answer it; but I have not a doubt that it can be answered; I will ask those who know more than I do, and see whether an answer can be given or not." A very foolish man may ask a question that two wise men will require twenty days to answer. I must never think, because a plausible objection is stated, through the sophistry of which I cannot see, that therefore nobody else can see through it. It is not that the argument is sound, but that I am not enlightened. But when the Holy Spirit thus brings to our remembrance plain, simple truths in his own blessed word, by one of those texts we may repel the objector, as our blessed Lord repelled the tempter: "It is written; it is written; it is written." Thus the Holy Spirit is precious to us as our Remembrancer. John Newton, an excellent and accomplished divine, was a refugee from his home, far off; he was standing at the helm, tossed upon a tempestuous ocean, in the momentary prospect of a watery grave. A text flashed on his memory, he knew not how,—we know now, and he knew before he

died,—a text that his mother taught him when a child, listening to her—the most effective teaching of all; and that text was the secret of his salvation. No doubt it was the Holy Spirit that brought up that buried fragment, that cast new and holy light upon that almost faded flower; that brought to his recollection a truth long buried—but not dead, and it became a living seed, and grew up unto life eternal.

VIII.

The Spirit the Source of Victory.

ZECHARIAH speaks of the erection of a material temple — tells us the decree of Heaven that it was to be completed, not by the resources of human power, nor by the expedients of human wisdom, however proper these might be as instrumentalities in their place, but by the direct and almighty power of the Holy Spirit of God. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

What applies to a holy temple that has passed away, not one stone of which rests any more upon another, may be still more justly, I think, applied to that spiritual temple which is composed of living stones, resting on the Rock of Ages: the only Church in the universe that God truly consecrates, and the only Church, one stone of which shall never be removed.

Power is the thirst, the consuming thirst of millions of mankind. Conquest, one of its passions, has been long the aim and the maddening ambition of the nations of the earth. Many a conqueror has felt what one of old is recorded to have said, that he would rather be the first in the humblest hamlet, than be the second in imperial Rome. So strong is the instinctive

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proved to be most efficient, — I can find out what is most useful from experience in healing the wound, and I can apply it, and use all precautionary measures to facilitate the cure as speedily as possible; but I have no power over the restorative energies of the system; I cannot touch the central energy—I know nothing of that mysterious thing, vitality — physical, intellectual, moral. There is in the treatment of diseases a province where the physician is everything; but there is, above that, and beyond that, a province where the physician is nothing at all. So, in the Christian system, there is a province where man, the minister, can do much, and there is a province above that where Christ, the Master, must do all, or nothing can be done effectually. I can preach, and my words shall carry conviction to the outward ear, but I cannot rivet those words upon the heart, so that they shall be elements of sanctifying and saving power. And, singularly enough, God may intrude into my province, he may dispense with my instrumentality, he may supersede it; he may leave it alone, and take the work into his own hand, and it will be done; but if I try to intrude into God's province—to pardon sin, to regenerate, by sprinkling, the human heart, to make man, by ministerial manipulations, a new creature, I instantly go into a province where I ought never to be, and, like the fabled hero who rose on waxen wings to reach the sun, I shall only be melted by its beams, and my last end shall be worse than my first. I believe that the great secret of the innumerable errors of the day is, that we have not made a strict line of demarcation between what man, the minister, can do, and ought to do, and

what the Lord the Spirit alone can and will do, when, where, and how he pleases.

There is the visible Church, that is, the company of all professors; the ministry may make them: but there is within that, like the kernel within the shell, the true Church; the Master must sign and seal them. There is a baptism that man can minister, when he sprinkles the babe with water, seeking a blessing; but there is beyond that the work that the Spirit alone must execute, in the change of that child's heart. There is, in the Lord's Supper, a province where the minister can do much; he can distribute the bread, and bless it, and give it to the communicants; that is his province; but the Lord, the Master of the feast, alone can create that inner communion between the soul and himself, which man can neither intercept nor create. So, the minister can pronounce how sins are forgiven, but when he attempts to step out of his own province, which is to pronounce, and assumes the jurisdiction of the Highest, which is to absolve, he tries to steal a beam from the glory of his Master, and he will only take a curse into his own bosom. Let us, then, clearly understand, that while we must do our part, and do it with all our might, we are to feel that nothing is done, if that be all; we are beyond that to lift up the waiting heart, and the earnest petition, that he who has sent the minister to do his part, will be pleased, additional thereto, to do his part, the inner, living, saving work, which endures for ever and ever.

Not only is there a part which man cannot do in the work of salvation, but there is much that man will not do. I suspect that very much of the inability that we

feel to believe, to pray, to love, to live, is not physical or material, but purely moral. I do believe, that, in the light of the judgment morn, the remark of this man and that man, "I cannot believe," will be discovered to have been but a phrase for, "I will not believe." The real inability is in will, and, hence, the Spirit's first work is, to work in man "to will," and next, "to do," of his good pleasure. And if there be things, then, that man not only cannot do, but needs the Spirit to do them for him; and if there be things that he will not do, he also needs the Spirit to do them. Melancthon, when he first saw the light of the glorious Gospel, and felt its precious influence on his heart, thought that he had nothing to do but to go forth and speak it, and the whole earth would accept so grand a Gospel. But he soon found himself compelled to make the just remark, that "Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon," that some men could not, and some men would not; and between the two, the progress that he made was of the most discouraging description.

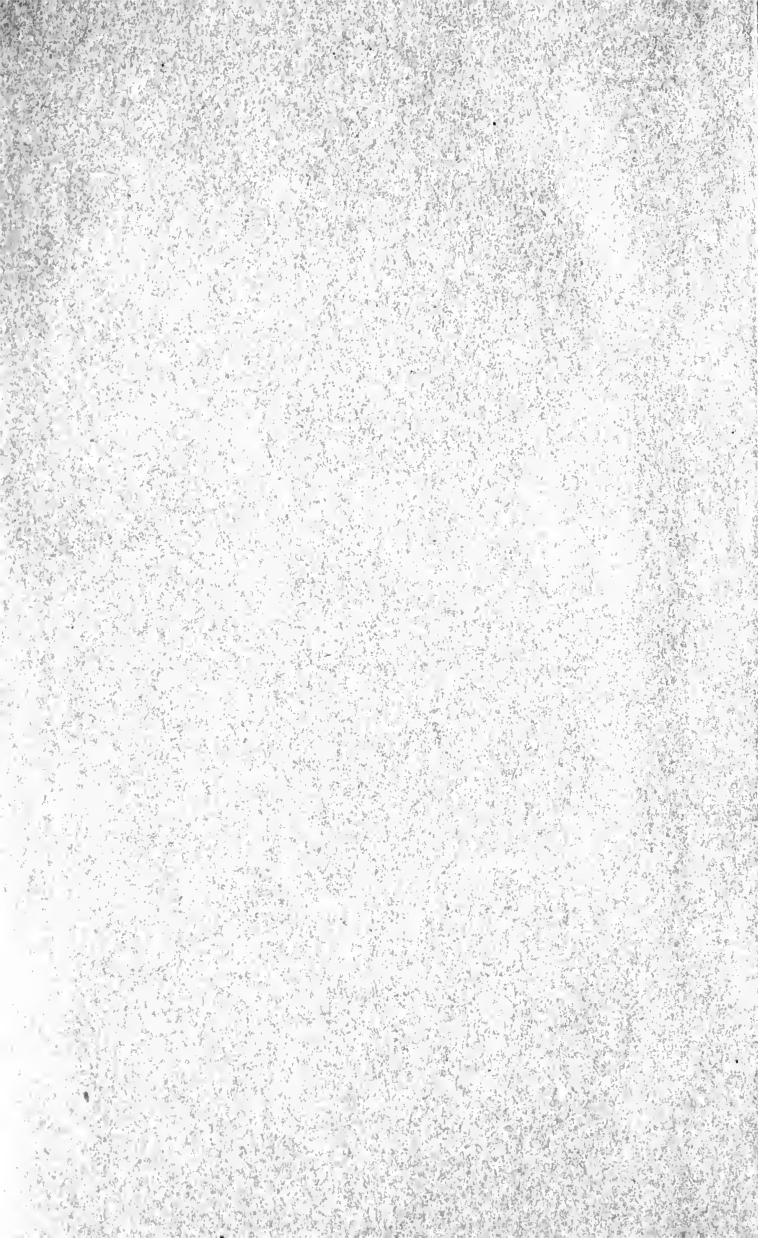
But the Apostle Paul, on the other hand, states, that one of the grand secrets of his success was the combination of ceaseless, personal effort, with ceaseless leaning on, and looking to the Holy Spirit of God. Just mark his words: "I have planted"—there is toil, — "and Apollos watered,"—there is additional toil, — "but God gave the increase." You see man's part—planting and watering; but also God's grand part, without which, the planting and the watering would be fruitless — "God gave the increase." And when the Apostle speaks again of his labors, he says, "I have labored more abundantly than ye all;" but mark how

exquisitely and delicately he corrects himself,—“yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me. Wherever there is the most prayerful heart, there is the most diligent hand; wherever there is the deepest dependence upon God, there is the putting forth of the greatest energy by man. “Prayer and painstaking,” said one of old, “are sufficient to convert the nations.” I believe, that what is wanted in the present day is greater personal exertion on the part of ministers in their own sphere, and a still greater dependence on the Holy Spirit, who is omnipotent in his sphere.

The most eloquent tongue will lose its power, and the most able right hand its cunning, unless sustained, encouraged, and endued by the Holy Spirit of God. Cease to quarrel about patronage and popular election, and begin to pray; cease to dispute about Episcopacy and Presbytery, and begin to pray; cease to look to the Bishop or the General Assembly, and begin to look above them to the Spirit of God alone. If anything exerts on the mind a larger directive influence than Christ, you may call yourself a Protestant, but you are essentially a Roman Catholic. A Roman Catholic is not a man who believes in the Pope of Rome; but who believes that the priest can forgive sin, that baptism gives regeneration, who excludes all but his own, who thinks that no man has a commission separate from his Church. The man who places the Church in the room of Christ,—tradition, the Confession of Faith, the Thirty-Nine Articles, in the room of the Bible,—or himself in the room of either, is essentially a follower of the Church of Rome.

Let all our theology be comprehended in this — no justifying righteousness except in Christ; no regenerative power but in the Holy Spirit; no church upon earth, the way to heaven, but Christ alone; the Bible without a clasp; the Throne of grace with infinite welcome; heaven, with all its glory, not bestowed or won by might or power, but by the Holy Ghost.

THE END.



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